

LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION]

[APRIL 1, 1872

[30 RESERVED.

No. 464.—VOL. XVIII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 23, 1872.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



BREAKING THE CHARM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Tempting Fortune," "Scarlet Berries," &c., &c.

CHAPTER IV.

Don't credit what they say. Don't listen to that girl; she'll make you believe anything she pleases. I am resolute. Old Play.

In the morning Lord Cardington was true to his promise. He called in Chesterfield Street to escort Milly to the station, as had been arranged the night before.

The lovers exchanged a significant glance. Milly took a tender farewell of her cousins, thanked Mr. and Mrs. Wadden for their kindness to her, and went away in Lord Cardington's brougham.

Soon after they had departed Sir Elliott Bridges called, looking rather grave.

"What is the matter, Sir Elliott?" demanded Mrs. Wadden. "I declare you look as grave as if you had the care of all the world upon your shoulders. Am I not right, girls?"

"I agree with you, mamma," replied Florence.

"You ought to know something about it," replied the baronet.

"About what?" asked Mrs. Wadden. "You excite our curiosity and then tantalize by keeping us in suspense."

"Lord Cardington has gone away with Miss Haines."

"Is that all? We could have told you that," answered Mrs. Wadden, with a laugh. "I suppose his lordship is a little smitten in that direction, though why he should be I cannot clearly make out. I thought men now-a-days did not like milk and water, but the fact of the matter is his lordship begged to be permitted to see her to the station, and I gave my consent."

"They have not gone to the station," answered Sir Elliott Bridges.

"Indeed. How do you know that?"

"I was standing at the corner of St. James's Square

[MILLY FINDS A SHELTER.]

when a brougham came by, and I waited for it to pass before I could cross over the road. Some one inside pulled the check string, and to my surprise Lord Cardington put his head out of the window."

"Did he see you?"

"No. He merely said to the driver, 'Go to Doctors' Commons, and stop in Paul's Chain.' This seemed to me to be a mysterious direction, then I caught a glimpse of Miss Haines and saw Cardington put his arm around her waist."

The ladies stared at one another on hearing this declaration.

"What on earth," said Mrs. Wadden, "can he want to take her to Doctors' Commons for?"

"I can surmise only one thing," replied Sir Elliott Bridges.

"And that is—"

"His intention to marry her. You know there is a registrar's office there. The ceremony is very simple, private, and expeditious. I have suspected this for some time past, and last night I warned the young lady in ambiguous language, but she did not pay much heed to my caution it seems."

"Why did you warn her?" asked Mrs. Wadden.

"I would rather not say. Pray do not press me on that point," replied Sir Elliott. "I know more about Cardington's private affairs than most people, but I do not feel myself at liberty to speak openly."

"If it is so—that they have really gone to be married—I should consider it a good thing for the girl, and I am glad of it. Peers are not plentiful, and it is something in this country to be the wife of a man of title. Yet I do not see the necessity for secrecy, nor do I approve of it. I should have felt more flattered if the marriage had taken place openly, and I had been consulted."

Sir Elliott bit his lips.

"I cannot agree with you, Mrs. Wadden," he replied. "There is danger ahead, and I wish I could have interfered, but unfortunately I cannot afford to offend Cardington. There is another mystery for you. However, time will show, and, whatever happens, I hope I shall not be blamed by any one."

Mrs. Wadden and her daughter assured him that there was no danger of that, and pressed him to be more communicative, but he remained obstinately silent.

In the meantime the brougham stopped where Sir Elliott Bridges had heard his lordship instruct the coachman to drive, and the couple got out.

Lord Cardington led Milly along a narrow street, then up a court which was filled with lawyers' offices.

They entered a house having several names painted on the lintel, and, going up three flights of stairs, they knocked at an aged door, being instantly admitted.

Milly found herself in a large room, furnished after the manner of a lawyer's office. Before her stood an elderly man with gray hair, who bowed coldly.

"This is the registrar," said his lordship, in a whisper, to Milly.

The elderly gentleman asked them a few questions, then proceeded to read the marriage service; the whole ceremony appearing to Milly to be legal and properly conducted.

When it was over his lordship conducted her back to the brougham, on the box of which were still Milly's two small trunks, and they drove to a large and fashionable hotel at the West End.

Lord Cardington wrote something in the visitors' book, and Milly, looking over his shoulder, read:

"Mr. and Mrs. Jackson."

"Why do you not write our real name, dearest?" she asked.

"Because I do not want all the servants to know it. Besides, there might be some of my friends staying here, and if they saw my name they would come and poster us with their congratulations, which would be inconvenient at a time like this," answered his lordship.

Milly thought this reason perfectly satisfactory. Indeed she did not harbour the slightest suspicion against the man whom she regarded as her husband, and they went to the private room they had engaged.

Here an elegant breakfast was served, and Milly

regretted as she looked at the vases full of hot-house flowers, and the champagne, and other luxuries, that none of her relations were present to do honour to her on such an auspicious occasion.

Lord Cardington was very kind, and talked eloquently about the joys of foreign travel, for they had arranged to go abroad for a month or more to enjoy their honeymoon.

He petted her and called her by endearing names, so that she felt secure in his love and was perfectly happy.

But when he proposed that they should go abroad that afternoon, and leave Dover by the night mail packet, she objected, pleading that the fatigue would be too much for her.

"Rather, darling," said she, "would I start to-morrow. Let us go to the opera to-night for an hour. I am a newly married wife, and you must let me have my own way."

His lordship combated this resolution on her part, but she would not give way, and at length he consented with an ill grace.

They spent the afternoon in each other's society, dined early, and went to the opera, where they procured a private box.

Being near Christmas, there was no Italian opera, but an English company were playing at Covent Garden, and they listened to the exquisite music of Balfe's "Bohemian Girl."

The house was crowded, and many were the glances directed towards the beautiful girl in evening dress, who looked so radiant and so lovely.

"I love you, my darling man. Oh, how I love you!" whispered Lord Cardington.

"Will you always love me, dearest?" she asked, turning her trusting eyes upwards to his.

"No!"

They both started.

The voice was not Cardington's, and the sound fell upon Milly's heart like ice, and chilled her to the bone.

Turning round to whence the sound had proceeded, Milly was astonished to see that a woman—tall, handsome, and dressed entirely in black—had unconsciously entered the box.

Lord Cardington had sunk into a chair, and seemed unable to speak; his limbs trembled violently, and big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow.

"Who are you? And how dare you intrude yourself into our box?" asked Milly, indignantly.

"Ask him; he knows. Ask him if he has the courage to tell you," answered the mysterious stranger.

His lordship did not utter a syllable.

"The coward is afraid of me. He cannot speak; he knows that I am his fate," continued the female.

"This is most scandalous and unseemly!" exclaimed Milly. "I cannot permit you to stay here. If you persist in insulting my husband and me also by your presence I shall call for assistance and have you removed. You have no right to intrude yourself into a private box."

The woman laughed scornfully.

"Your husband?" she said.

"I repeat it. We were married this morning."

"Where?"

"Before the registrar in Doctors' Commons."

"As I thought," replied the woman. "The man who read the marriage service over you was no more a clergyman or a registrar than is either of the box-keepers in this theatre. The old man is a paid tool of my Lord Cardington's, as you must have found out sooner or later. The ceremony was a farce, girl. You are on the brink of the precipice, and I am here to save you—from no love to you, but to fulfil my vow of hatred to him."

She pointed as she spoke with a tragic air to the nobleman, who cowered beneath her withering glance.

"I too," she continued, "have gone through the same farce, and am as much Lady Cardington as you are."

At those dreadful words a sudden faintness overcame Milly, and she would have fallen had she not summoned fortitude to her aid.

Recovering herself by an effort, she said to his lordship:

"Why do you sit there like a stock or a stone? Can you not bear what this woman says?"

He made her no reply.

"Is it true," she went on, "that you have betrayed her as you would have betrayed me? Oh, my lord!" she continued, bitterly, "you have mistaken my character if you think that my love for you can endure a trial like this. I can hate and resent as well as love."

Looking up at her at last with burning eyes and quivering lips, he said:

"Can you believe the ravings of a madwoman? I know her not, nor have I ever seen her before."

"Heaven forgive you for the falsehood," said the

woman. "But she shall have proof. See—there is the base certificate given me by the mock registrar in Doctors' Commons. There is the ring he placed upon my finger. He took me from home and friends. I was a lady; my friends are rich. What I am now is no matter; I am what he made me. Chancing to be at the opera to-night, I saw you together, and I have come to unmask a villain. We went abroad after what he called our marriage, and he basely deserted me in Brussels, leaving me without money or friends to come back to England as best I could. Let him deny it if he can."

"It is false—false as the tongue that utters it!" cried Lord Cardington, in an ungovernable passion. "Do not credit her, Milly. I have called you my angel; for Heaven's sake listen to me! She is some insane impostor who wishes to extort money. Begone, woman, or—"

"Do what you like, my lord," interrupted the woman, calmly; "I care not for a police case and an exposure so long as you share my shame."

He glared at her fiercely, and with tigerish eyes; his lips were stained with blood, for he had bitten them in his rage; his fists were clenched until the nails ran into the soft flesh. Such a picture of savage hatred and despair is seldom seen in a human being.

"I believe you," said Milly to the stranger; "you have my thanks; from what an abyss of degradation and misery have you saved me! I was warned of this, but in my blindness I would not pay heed to what was said to me for my good. My lord—"

He tried to seize her hand, but she evaded his grasp, receding with a shudder like that one feels at an anticipated contact with a venomous serpent.

"My lord," she went on, in a stony voice, "we part, and far ever. I will try to forget the wrong you have done me, but I do not promise you I shall succeed."

"Hear me!" he exclaimed.

"No. I have done with you."

"Think of what we were, and what we might have been to one another," he pleaded.

She rose and drew her opera cloak around her, for it was cold, and she was like marble—her blood seemed to have stagnated in her veins.

No longer the simple, confiding country girl—she stood erect and stately like a queen. Until the last half-hour she was a girl, now she was a woman.

Opening the door of the box, she passed out, and went to the room whence she had left her bonnet. This she put on, giving the attendant a gratuity, and left the theatre.

She paused underneath the portico, and the porters importuned her to have a cab, or to be allowed to fetch her carriage.

To avoid these she strolled on, and entered the Piazza around Covent Garden. This was almost deserted, and she leant against a pillar to recover her thoughts.

What an ending was it to a day which had dawned so brightly for her. All her hopes were blighted, withered, and crushed; her heart was as heavy as lead, and her brain was so affected that she could not properly exercise her reasoning powers.

There was a choking sensation in her throat, and she felt dizzy.

What could she do? Whither could she go?

At one moment she thought of returning home, at another of seeking the shelter of Mrs. Wadden's house.

But what would her friends think of her? Would they not imagine that she was in some sense guilty, and despise her?

It required time for cool reflection to enable her to know what was best to do; and here was she without money, homeless, friendless, at eleven o'clock at night in the heart of London.

Well might she shrink and tremble. It was a terrible situation for a girl like herself, whose heart was well nigh broken, and who was stunned by the weight of a crushing calamity. Then she thought of the river. In its friendly bed she might find repose.

She moved away, half frantic with despair, and might have committed the rashness of all actions—self-destruction—had not an incident happened which recalled her to herself.

CHAPTER V.

Lives there a man so firm who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonising throes,
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?

BURNS.

MILLY had not gone far before she met a gentleman in evening dress, with his coat tightly buttoned, but just open sufficiently to show the white tie, which indicated that he had been dining somewhere, probably at one of the hotels in the neighbourhood.

A lamp-post was near, and its ghastly light streamed upon her poor, pale face, looking so hard

and stern and unloving in the blankness of its despair.

"Miss Haines!" exclaimed the gentleman.

"Let me pass, please," she replied, looking at him in a bewildered manner.

"Do you not know me? I am Sir Elliott Bridges. What has happened?—Pray tell me. Make me your confidant? I do not inquire impudently, but from the sincere friendship which I entertain for you. If I can be of service to you in any way do not hesitate to command me."

Milly recognized the gentleman she had met so often at Mrs. Wadden's house, but she turned coldly from him.

"You are his friend," she said.

"Do you mean Lord Cardington's? I certainly am an acquaintance of his, but that is no reason why you should visit his sins upon me."

"Oh! I am so miserable and so friendless," sobbed the unfortunate girl, sinking down upon a step, and covering her face with her hands.

She had given way at last, and it was lucky that she had done so, for tears were a relief to her over-charged brain, and she felt comfort in weeping.

Her happy and innocent home in the country, her kind parents, and her simple life, all rose up before her.

Why had the serpent stolen into her Paradise?

"My dear child," said Sir Elliott, in a kind voice, "will you not tell me what has happened? I may be able to give you that advice of which you seem to stand in need. You cannot stay here like this. You are in evening dress, and the night is cold."

"I do not feel it," she answered.

She spoke the truth, for though the air was keen and frosty she was in a burning fever.

"Will you not speak to me?"

"I cannot. I am not calm enough yet to talk about that," she replied.

"I think I can guess," said Sir Elliott, with a pitying smile. "Lord Cardington has made love to you, but his fate has met you. I mean the woman who trusted and was betrayed by him. You have seen her, have you not?"

Milly nodded her head.

"As I thought," he went on. "She has, I presume, told you that of which you would have infinitely preferred to remain in ignorance; but, knowing which, you felt yourself compelled to leave him without a word or look of affectionate regret. What a pity that you should have so misplaced your affection. Had I not only discriminated between the wolf and the lamb—"

"Sir Elliott," she exclaimed, thinking that she discovered a hidden meaning in his words.

"Why should I not speak the truth?" he continued. "I have long loved you, and will now accord you the protection of which you stand in need."

There was something horrible to Milly now in the word love, and she could not bear to hear it mentioned.

She had loved once, but she felt that she could never—never love again.

If Lord Cardington was to be dreaded and avoided so was Sir Elliott.

Springing to her feet, she fled like a startled fawn, not knowing whither she was going. He tried to stop her, but she eluded his grasp, and was soon lost to sight in the dark arcades of the market.

Stiffening an impression, Sir Elliott gazed after her, and peered into the darkness with no other result than that of increasing his chagrin.

She ran till she was out of breath, then sank, half fainting, against the shutters of a shop.

A policeman who was passing stopped to look at her.

"Anything wrong, miss?" he asked.

"I am ill," replied Milly; "and—and—I cannot enter into particulars with you, but I should feel deeply grateful if you would tell me where I can get a lodging for the night."

"Have you no home, miss?" he asked.

"No; at least, no home that I choose to go to. I want some respectable shelter. I will reward you for your kindness."

The policeman looked at her again, marked the richness of her dress, her diamond bracelets, her rings, and the gold chain round her neck. He also noticed her air of weariness and distress.

"My wife lives in the next street, miss," he said. "We've only a common lodging, not fit for such as you; but if you really want a shelter, as you say you do, my miss will make you up a bed. Come with me quickly, for I have not much time to spare. I must meet my inspector at this point in a quarter of an hour, or I shall be reported."

"Thank you, thank you," replied Milly. "I feel that I am safe with you; anything will do for me."

She followed the constable into a small side street, until he stopped at a house and rang the second bell, which brought down a woman.

"Is it you, James?" she asked, looking suspiciously at his companion.

"Yes, and I've brought you a lodger," he replied.

"A lodger!" she repeated.

"The lady will tell you all about it. I can't stop. She wants a bed, and you can easily make her one up, or let her have ours. See to it, will you, Mary? I am on night duty you know, and shall not be back till half-past six."

So saying, the constable walked away, leaving his wife and Milly together.

The policeman's name was Emerson, and Mrs. Emerson scarcely knew how to act. She regarded Milly as a questionable character, and at first, as she afterwards remarked to her landlady, she did not care about having such trumpery in the house.

Seeing her indecision, Milly said, in an imploring voice:

"Do, for goodness' sake, take me in. I am so ill and my mind is upset. I must have rest, or I shall go mad."

"What has happened to you?" asked Mrs. Emerson.

"I was married falsely to-day to a man whom I have discovered is a villain, and I have run away from him. That is all I can tell you now."

"Why not go to your friends?"

"I cannot to-night. Give me time to think. To-morrow I shall be more collected. Do you want money? Take this bracelet. The diamonds are valuable," replied Milly.

"No, no," answered Mrs. Emerson, more kindly.

"I don't want that. Come in, poor thing, and I'll do my best for you. I would not have kept you waiting, but really there are such queer characters about the streets, and my husband is so stupidly good-natured that—but here, I'll say no more. I've told you that you shall sleep here, and so you shall. Why, my gracious!" she added, "you must be nigh perished with the cold—you in evening dress and nothing but that thin shawl round your shoulders!"

Milly followed her into the house, and was shown into a comfortable room, where she sat down while Mrs. Emerson made her a bed in the corner, on the floor, with such materials as she could obtain. She refused all offers of refreshment, contenting herself with a glass of water.

"I don't often have ladies come to see me," said Mrs. Emerson, with a smile, "but I have done my best for you, miss. I know what ought to be, for I was once housemaid in a gentleman's family, and that's how me and James first met, though I never thought I should marry him, the first night as he came in with his bull's-eye to say that the kitchen door was left wide open, and I gave him some cold mutton and a jug of beer, he looked so famished like."

"You'll find the bed soft, miss, and I hope you'll sleep sound, and don't let James disturb you when he comes home in the morning. You'll know it's him by his heavy boots on the stairs. I'm sure I'm sorry for you, miss, and hope it will come all right soon."

"I am too ill to thank you," replied Milly, "but I shall not forget you, good, kind creature."

She held out her hand and shook that of her hostess, who, seeing that she was apparently comfortable, and wanted nothing, left her to herself, and she was soon asleep. Her mind was overwrought and she was incapable of thought. What she required most of all was sleep, and she was fortunate in being able to fall into a sound slumber.

When she woke in the morning it was with a lighter heart and a clearer head. The harm done was not so great after all. She had escaped a great peril.

Mrs. Emerson had tidied up the room, which was disordered as she had no family. Breakfast was laid, and as soon as Milly got up the bed was put away and she sat down to a cup of tea and an egg, which had been carefully provided for her.

"I hope you find yourself better, miss," said Mrs. Emerson. "You slept sound."

"Thank you, I am much refreshed. I do not know what I should have done had it not been for your kindness," replied Milly. "And now I am going to trouble you again. I want you to sell one of my bracelets for me, procure me some money, and buy me something I can go out in; you know, I daresay, some ready-made shop. I shall call upon some friends this morning, but I cannot venture in this evening dress."

Mrs. Emerson promised compliance with this request, and executed Milly's order much to her satisfaction, purchasing a linen dress and a woollen shawl—secondhand, it is true, but not much the worse for wear.

Leaving the remainder of the money with her new friend, Milly went out, taking the direction of Hyde Park, which, having reached, she sat down and reflected.

Her mind was still much perturbed, and she could not have remained in the house with Mrs. Emerson on any account.

In the first place the good woman was garrulous, and would talk, in the second she was inquisitive and would ask questions. Milly's perplexity was how to act.

She was almost afraid to go back to Mrs. Wadden's lest so determined a villain as Lord Cardington, and one so experienced in the ways of deception, should follow and try to abduct her. She had heard of such things, and believed him capable of any rascality.

Nor had she any inclination to return to Chertsey just yet; her mother and father would overwhelm her with questions which she could not answer, for were she to confess all that had occurred she knew that she would be eternally disgraced in their eyes, first for her disobedience and secrecy, and secondly for living with, if only for a few hours, Lord Cardington as his wife.

So strict, so severe, so religious were Mr. and Mrs. Haines that Milly was afraid of them.

Sir Elliott Bridges would tell the Waddens where he had seen her and what he had extracted from her, together with the conclusion he had arrived at, and Mrs. Wadden would at once communicate the news to her parents.

So Milly was reduced to a terrible state of conjecture and uncertainty, and sat for hours, harassed and worried, without arriving at any conclusion.

She got up in the same sad perplexity, and in a purposeless manner went on till she came to the Drive, along which several well-appointed equipages were dashing.

Not noticing the carriage, she essayed to cross the road, and was aroused from her reverie by hoarse cries.

Looking up, she found she was in front of a carriage with two horses. In vain the coachman tried to stop them and shouted to her to run. She was transfixed with terror and did not move.

The next moment the horses were upon her, she felt a stunning blow, and in a moment all was blank oblivion.

Milly was lying in the centre of the road and the high-bred horses were plunging madly above her.

CHAPTER VI.

Did I not tell you that my lord would find a way to come to you?
Beau's Stratagem.

Soon the horses were forced back, and, strong, willing arms, such as are always to be found in an English crowd, bore the girl to the roadside and laid her upon the grass.

She was apparently much hurt, and breathed with difficulty. Her eyes were closed, and her long, pretty hair was covered with dust and mud, her dress also was bespattered, and torn in several places. It was impossible to say how severely injured she was without the examination of a medical man.

An elderly lady who occupied the interior of the carriage called her footman, who had just given the policeman on duty his mistress's name and address.

"Mrs. Mallison, Bryanston Square," that was what was on her card.

"What is the matter?" she asked. "Has anything gone wrong with the carriage or the horses? If so let me get out and I will proceed home in a cab."

"No, ma'am!" replied the domestic, who did not consider the circumstance of much importance, "only some one run over."

"Only!" repeated the old lady, indignantly, "is not that sad enough? Who is it?"

"She looks like a young lady, ma'am."

"Indeed! A young lady run over and by my horses. How carelessly the coachman must have been driving! Is she much injured?"

"Can't say, ma'am," the footman answered; "they have sent for something to take her to the hospital upon!"

"Dear me, and all this time she is, perhaps, suffering terribly!" said Mrs. Mallison, who was evidently a good-hearted creature. "It may be a case of life and death, in which delay will prove fatal. Cabs are not allowed to enter the park, so they will have to carry her on something, and I am the indirect cause of it all; tell them to bring her here and put her in the carriage; she shall go home with me and be attended to in my house, by my doctor."

The footman stared at his mistress, open-mouthed, as if he did not understand such an application of practical charity in high places.

But when the command was repeated, in a more imperative tone, he went to the crowd which had collected round Milly, and, pushing his way through, intimated his mistress's intention to those who were nearest the unfortunate girl.

Rough men took her up, handling her with as much gentleness as if she had been a child.

The cushions of the carriage were placed on the mats and she was laid upon them, Mrs. Mallison sitting quite up in one corner, in the roomy old family coach and regarding the pretty white face with wonderment not unminged with awe.

She told her servants to drive carefully and avoid any stones which might jolt the sufferer, and to call on the way at her doctor's house, which was near the Marble Arch, so that he might at once attend to his patient.

These instructions given she drove away, the crowd waving their caps and clapping their hands in token of their appreciation of her conduct, but forbearing to cheer, as any noise would have been unseemly.

In less than half an hour Milly was lying on a large bed in a spacious and handsomely furnished chamber. Kind hands and sympathising faces were around her.

The blood and dirt had been washed from her head and the doctor had examined and bandaged her wounds.

He said that she had sustained a fracture of the skull, that her left arm and one rib were broken, and that she would be ill for some weeks, though he did not anticipate any fatal result.

The head was dressed, the bones set, a sedative administered, and, having done all he could, the medical man went his way.

For long, weary weeks Milly remained ill.

There was not a scrap of paper about her to tell who she was or whence she had come, but her golden necklace, her rings, and the remaining diamond bracelet, Lord Cardington's gift, shewed that she was not in poverty and want.

For a time she was delirious. The nurses who watched her told Mrs. Mallison that she talked strangely, and the old lady went then away for a few hours, while she watched the unconscious talker and followed her through her incoherent ravings.

There is something very dreadful in sitting wearily through the long watches of the night by the bedside of a sick person, listening to the delicious ravings of a mind which is wrecked for a time.

The hour of midnight had struck, and Milly moved restlessly.

"Away!" she cried, in feverish accents, "I tell you I am his wife. I alone am Lady Cardington."

At the pronunciation of this name Mrs. Mallison's face grew grave and clouded; she bent over the sleeping girl as if anxious not to allow one syllable to escape her ears, but it was some time before she spoke again.

"Forgive you, Claude!" said she, bitterly, "never, never. Had I not been saved in time you would have done me the greatest wrong a man can do a woman. Never hope for forgiveness from me."

Then her mood would change.

"Oh! yes," she exclaimed, "I forgive him, because I am his wife. He may have deceived you, but he has married me. It was done legally before the registrar. Who are you, woman, that you should come between me and my husband? As Lady Cardington I order you away—away, away, I say!"

Then all was still again. The paroxysm was over, and the girl breathed more freely and slept.

"Strange!" murmured Mrs. Mallison, "poor strange! 'Twas his name. She uttered his name. Claude Vigors Plantagenet Castleman, Lord Cardington. I know it and have cause to. Is this poor girl one of his victims? If so she may become an instrument in my hands to work out that vengeance which—but I will not anticipate. Let me wait until she is well; I shall know all then, and, knowing, shall be able to tell how to act."

Christmas came and went, and it was not till the middle of February that Milly was able to be moved from her bed to the drawing-room.

In reply to her questions she had been told how she had been run over in the park, and subsequently, by the kindness of the lady to whom the carriage belonged, taken to the large house in Bryanston Square, and there attended to by one of the most skilful surgeons of the day.

Milly felt grateful, but her heart overflowed with grief when she thought of her desolate position, which had become aggravated by her illness.

What could her parents think of her? What her friends? How much anxiety and thought and misery she must have caused them during the time of her illness.

Mrs. Mallison saw her sorrow and did her best to win her confidence, but it was some time before Milly was induced to make her protectress her friend, and she only consented at last when Mrs. Mallison hinted that while delirious she had said enough in a disjointed and unconnected way to give the key to her position.

"You are the victim of Lord Cardington," said Mrs. Mallison; "that you have admitted, and it is because I have the most serious reason to hate and utterly abominate that disgrace to the peerage that I am induced to take a farther interest in you, and ask you to confide in me. Do so, my child, and you will find me always your friend."

Milly was lying on a sofa; oranges and grapes were on a table by her side. The colour was slowly re-

turning to her cheeks, but her poor, shattered arm, not yet strong, lay in a sling, and she was wan and wasted by her long illness.

Seeing that Mrs. Mallison knew so much, remembering her kindness to her since her accident, and confessing to herself how more than ever now she wanted a friend, Milly resolved without farther delay to gratify her wishes, in which there was nothing really impertinent or objectionable. So she freely related all that had occurred to her since she quitted her primitive home in Chertsey to visit her fashionable cousins in May Fair.

Mrs. Mallison listened with the utmost possible attention to her recital until she had finished, evincing some emotion while she was dwelling upon the scene at the opera, and sighing frequently.

"The lady who entered your box was dark and tall, you say?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, and very handsome. Never shall I forget her face. But why do you sigh, ma'am?" asked Milly.

"Because from your description of her and my knowledge of her career I cannot doubt that she is my daughter."

"Your daughter? Good Heavens! Mrs. Mallison," cried Milly.

"Listen, my dear," said the old lady, quietly and sadly, "and you shall hear as distressing a history as ever was related. My only child Ariadne was the daughter in whom my husband and myself delighted. With his dying breath he begged me to watch her carefully and do my best to ensure her happiness in life. Educated in France and England at a vast expense, I was about to introduce her to fashionable society, when, like a serpent on the hearth, Lord Cardington made our acquaintance. Ariadne loved him, and, without my knowledge, eloped with him. You know the rest. Details of his lordship's villany have reached me by degrees, and you have completed my information. I know now that my daughter was the victim of a mock marriage. Her sensitive spirit would not allow her to return to me, though Heaven knows I would have received her with open arms. I have moved heaven and earth to find her, but without success; yet I do not despair, for you shall help me, my dear."

"I, Mrs. Mallison?" said Milly, in astonishment. "Yes, we will unite our efforts. You have cause as great as I to hate Lord Cardington. We will hunt him down and restore my child to her home."

"In what way?"

"That remains to be seen. First of all, as soon as you have sufficiently recovered, you shall go and see your parents."

"How shall I meet them?" Milly asked, tearfully.

"Tell them simply that you have been very ill; tell them the truth, namely, that you were run over by my horses as you were about to return to them, and that I have offered to make you my companion at a handsome salary. Then, having quieted their fears, come back to me, and we will plot and scheme. Mine is a fertile brain, and, I assure you, we will hit upon some expedient. Will you consent to help me?"

"Oh, yes," rejoined Milly.

"You hate Lord Cardington?"

"Cordially. All my affection for him has changed to detestation."

"I believe you and admire your spirit," said Mrs. Mallison, kissing her. "You shall be to me as a second daughter. There is more than mere accident in our meeting as we have done. I believe we are the instruments to work out the decrees of fate."

Quitting the room, Mrs. Mallison left her to think over the revelation she had made her.

Events were multiplying themselves in Milly's strange career, and she reflected upon the wonderful nature of her acquaintance with Mrs. Mallison and the peculiar task she had pledged herself to perform.

Revenge upon Lord Cardington was indeed congenial to her feelings, for he deserved no mercy.

She felt interested in and grateful to the lady who had stepped in to save her from a dreadful fate at the eleventh hour, and she wished to return the favour she had done her.

When she was well and strong enough she drove to the station in Mrs. Mallison's carriage and went to Chertsey.

The streets wore the old familiar look, and she was irresistibly carried back to the days of her childhood. Tears stole down her cheeks, but, suppressing her emotion, she hurried on, drawing still closer her thick veil to conceal her features and prevent recognition.

At length she stopped in front of the shop.

The trees were still there, their branches naked and stripped of leaves, looking desolate and bare in the wintry weather, but the shop itself seemed deserted.

It was high noon, yet the shutters were up, and no signs of habitation showed themselves.

Feeling giddy and faint, Milly staggered, and would have fallen had not a friendly hand extended itself and caught her round the waist.

Milly looked up and breathed a sigh of relief.

It was Mr. Sampson the butcher, and a near neighbour. From him she would hear what had happened, though her heart sank within her as she expected to be told of some shocking calamity for which she would be alone to blame.

(To be continued.)

LOOK AHEAD.

Look not back upon the past,
Save to profit by its teachings;

To experience hold fast,

Only to regard its preachings:

Dark the dead days may have been,

With that blindness born of sin,

Yet there's brightness you may win—

Look ahead!

See you ship that cleaves the wave;

Stormy is the angry billow,

Yet she sails on firm and brave,

Though each mast bends like a willow:

Back, is sure disaster dire;

Forward, hope burns like a fire,

Flames of which shall ne'er expire—

Look ahead!

Better far the will that keeps

Fast by long, though vain endeavour

Than the energy that sleeps

And lies dumb in sloth for ever;

Ill success may mark the past,

But with hope nailed to the mast

Victory shall come at last—

Look ahead!

History with names is bright

That shall ever live in story,

Names of men who braved the fight

Patently, and purchased glory.

Let their grand examples be

Stars to guide you o'er life's sea

To the port of destiny—

Look ahead!

One looked back and lost the prize

When she fled from Sodom burning,

And a pillar 'neath the skies

She became for backward turning.

Look not back, where'er you stand;

Keep up heart and nerve your hand,

And you'll reach the Promised Land—

Look ahead!

C. D.

ONES.

ONE hour lost in the morning by lying in bed will put back all the business of the day.

One hour gained by rising early is worth one month of labour in the year.

One hole in the fence will cost ten times as much as it will to fix it at once.

One diseased sheep will spoil a flock.

One unruled animal will teach all others in company bad tricks, and the Bible says "One sinner destroys much good."

One drunkard will keep a family poor, and make them miserable.

One wife that is always telling how fine her neighbour dresses, and how little she can get will look pleasanter if she talk about something else.

One husband that is penurious and lazy, and deprives his family of necessary comforts, such as their neighbours enjoy, is not as desirable a husband as he ought to be.

FLOWERS.—How the universal heart of man blossoms flowers! They are wreathed round the cradle, the marriage altar, and the tomb. The Cupid of the ancient Hindoos tipped his arrows with flowers, and orange-flowers are a bridal crown with us, a nation of yesterday. Flowers garlanded the Grecian altar, and hung in votive wreaths before the Christian shrine. All these are most appropriate uses. Flowers should deck the brow of the youthful bride, for they are in themselves a lovely type of marriage. They should twine round the tomb, for their perpetually renewed beauty is a symbol of the resurrection. They should festoon the altar, for their fragrance and their beauty ascend in perpetual worship before the Most High.

DEATH OF A SON OF BURNS.—William Nicol Burns, the second of the three sons of Robert Burns who alone of his six children survived infancy, and the last survivor of those three, died at his residence at Cheltenham on the 21st ult., in his eighty-second year—having been born on the 9th of April, 1791. Colonel Burns was named William Nicol after his father's

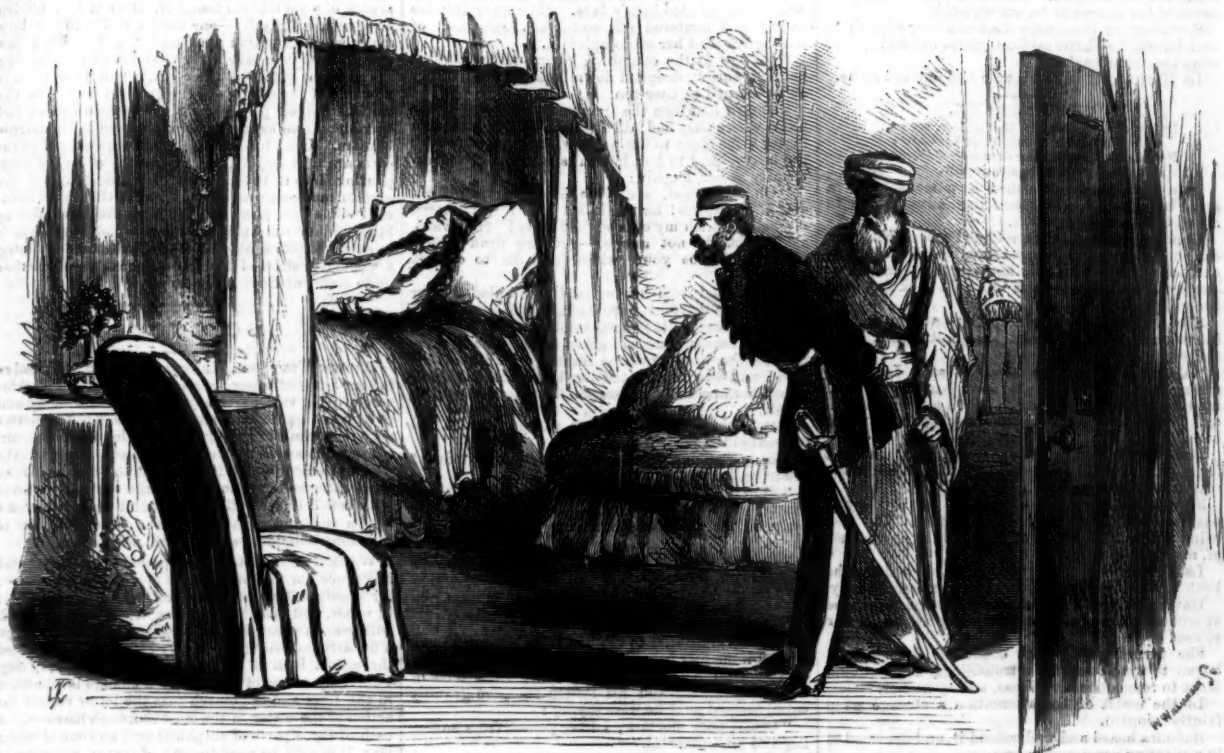
friend, the master in the High School at Edinburgh, one of the trio celebrated in "Willie brewed a peck o' maut." Colonel Burns was buried on the 28th in the mausoleum at Dumfries, beside his illustrious father; and where his mother, the immortal Jean Armour, and his two brothers, were also interred.

COAST FORTIFICATIONS.—Preparations are being completed for mounting a large number of the 64-pounder rifled muzzle-loading guns—old smooth-bore cast-iron 32-pounder guns, bored out and fitted with a rifled steel tube, on Major Palliser's plan—in the Portsmouth forts, the Hilsa lines at the entrance of Portsea Island from the mainland, and other parts of fortifications defending the port's mouth other than on the sea face of the defences. These latter will be armed with as large rifled guns as room can be found within the works to mount them, and the maximum size of gun that can be mounted under the circumstances will be found to be the 10-inch one of 18 tons.

RATEABLE PROPERTY.—The Poor Law Department has laid before the House of Commons a return which shows that the rateable value of property in England and Wales, on which the contribution to the "common fund" was calculated at Lady Day, 1870, was 104,405,304*l.*; and the amount of the gross estimated rental in 1870 was 123,365,847*l.* The rateable value, as settled by the assessment committees in the valuation lists last approved for 1871 is 107,865,951*l.*; and the gross estimated rental 127,091,854*l.* These are the totals; the return shows the amounts, county by county. The return includes estimated amounts for the few unions not yet revised by the assessment committees, and includes the amounts for unions and parishes not under the Union Assessment Committee Act of 1862. The expenses incurred by the committees in the year 1870-71, and remuneration allowed to the clerks amounted together to 31,454*l.* The costs incurred by guardians in appeals against the poor-rate in the same period amounted to 7,004*l.*

THE FRUITS OF BOMBAY.—Passing by the famous banyan-tree, with its widely spreading branches, which in their umbrageous luxuriance could shelter a troop of cavalry, we must not omit some mention of the peepul, a tree sacred to Vishnoo, and held in high veneration by all Hindoos, who consider it a duty to plant them. One of the most delicious fruits, always after the mango, and perhaps the plantain, is the guava, which has a very delicate flavour; the custard apple, a round soft fruit, the inside of which much resembles a custard in taste, is also very choice. Other fruits are the shaddock, sweet time, pomogranate, water melon, which grows to an enormous size, sometimes being three feet high, and another highly prized description, called the musk-melon, which has a very delicate flavour. The chief vegetables peculiar to the country are *brinjals*, which have small seeds enclosed within a dark-coloured rind, and are served up cut in two, and with the inside mixed with butter; also the *bindy*, a pod three or four inches in length, of a green colour, and, when boiled, presenting a peculiar slimy appearance, but which is thought a delicacy when served on toast. Neither of these vegetables is very highly thought of by Europeans, and they do not supersede those in use in England. Before quitting the subject of fruit and vegetables it should be recorded that the onions of Bombay have a deserved celebrity for their size, mildness, and agreeable flavour.

THE FUTURE OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY.—The *Broad Arrow* says:—Some of the most urgent reforms really wanted may be briefly enumerated as follows:—1. A reorganization of the Artillery into more handy bodies than the present brigades, both for tactical purposes and administration; but without any disturbance of the present system of promotion of the officers. 2. The localization of such bodies of Artillery in particular districts. 3. The preservation of the battery (but of reasonable size) under a captain as the working unit of the Artillery. 4. A fuller recognition of the very high position of regimental full colonels of Artillery, by all those employed on the Staff, being made brigadier-generals of Artillery. 5. A more distinct and clearly defined position for lieutenant-colonels of Artillery, and their complete identification with their commands. 6. The promotion of all first captains of Artillery to the rank of regimental major, and the abolition of the name of second captain. 7. The training of all officers of Artillery as far as possible to all the duties of both Field and Garrison Artillery. 8. The separation of the men into Field Artillery (including Horse Artillery) and Garrison Artillery. 9. That the regular complement of officers should always be kept for duty with their batteries, all those in any way otherwise employed being made supernumerary or "seconded." 10. That a regular flow of promotion should be secured by some comprehensive and liberal scheme of retirement, based on both age and length of service.



[LA MORT FUZZLED.]

VICTOR AND VANQUISHED.

CHAPTER XIX.

In mercy's name, what sound is that?
Oh, Heaven! pursued, discovered, lost!

THREE days had passed since they began their toilsome march, hiding by day in old barns or ruined castles and tramping by night, while the pale stars lit the way, then the fugitives found they must rest. Hereward seemed dying, the delicate Indian girl could walk no more, and they were exhausted from lack of provisions.

Hitherto Watt, who poached like an inveterate rogue as he was, had supplied them with snared rabbits and partridges for their daily fare, which they had cooked by their gipsy fires; but now, when death seemed stamped on his young master's face, and Badoura languished with weakness, he determined to give them rest at all risks, and to procure such medicines as might help his master.

On the third morning they stopped at a fine old country house, which stood alone in the midst of a beautiful park, once ornamental.

It was a gentleman's hunting-box, but the owner—a spendthrift lord who long ago had run through his fortune—had been forced to retire to the Continent, in order that his creditors might have time to forget their injuries, and his hunting-seat had been allowed to go to ruin.

The house itself had been so carefully shut up that no robber, however bold, had as yet been able to gain an entrance, and this very circumstance favoured the party of fugitives.

No one would dream of looking for them there, nor would the people of the adjoining hamlets suspect the presence of strangers.

Watt, who could climb like a fly, and was slim as a child, scaled the wall, gained the roof, and, squeezing himself down one of the chimneys, soon had the nails extricated which had fastened the front door, and the whole party entered.

The rooms had been richly furnished and supplied with every comfort; but now cobwebs covered the rare old mahogany; moths had riddled the tapestry, and a rookery had been founded in the corner of the best chamber.

They laid Hereward on one of the eider-down beds, and expelled the rooks, dashed out one of the lancet panes of the bolted windows, and shook out the faded arras in the scented breeze.

In a twinkling the chamber was freshened from the mould of so many years, the carpet swept with fresh grass, and a great bunch of odorous flowers placed beside the bed by the perfume-loving Indian girl.

In this retreat they nursed the sick youth for days undiscovered, and probably by this timely rest prevented his death.

A week after their arrival the three insurgents had gone into the nearest village to buy food and medicine as they had done twice before without exciting remark.

Scarcely had they been an hour gone when a mighty knocking was heard at the door, and Badoura looked from her window.

Ah, why was her dark cheek so pale?
She started back, quivering like an aspen leaf, for the court was filled with soldiers.

She darted to the outer room, where Watt was soaping away at his master's sheets, and her wild eyes told him the tale.

Watt made one flying leap to his master, and seized him in his long arms, with the wild intention of rushing with him somewhere.

Seyd looked in from his tasteful decorations for the breakfast of his mistress to see the cause of this uproar, and his eye fell upon the lance-paned window.

In a moment his copper skin became deadly colourless, his small black eyes glittered with horror.

"The soldiers!" he exclaimed; "but look!—look!—who is that?"

Watt, bending, like a brooding mother, over his dear master, glanced from the corner of a pane.

The leader of the soldiers had drawn his horse out to the front of the building, and was examining each window with a hawk's gaze.

"Death and destruction!" hissed Slygreen; "that's Captain La Mort!"

"If you will secrete yourself," said the Gentoo, wagging his white head, "I think my mistress and I can save the sahib between us. If they see you here they will be sure that Hereward sahib is not far away."

Obedient to a nod, Badoura assisted the old man in tearing off the upper bed from Hereward's couch, then the thick straw mattress.

A canvas sheet was left stretched on the bed frame. Seyd had seen two long gun-cases in the corridor; he brought them, and placed one on each side of the canvas frame. An aperture was left between; he signed Watt to lay his master there.

Hereward was laid down, looking deliciously about him. Badoura pressed her trembling hands to his lips; oh, if he should babble now!

Watt and Seyd tore two shelves from the kitchen cupboard, and came flying back with them.

A second thundering summons sounded at the door as they lay the boards above Hereward, resting them on the gun-cases. They had not time to see whether they precisely fitted, or whether they pressed upon

him, for the front door was being broken in. They tossed on the mattress and the bed, and darted from the chamber, leaving Badoura to finish the tableau.

Watt had time to search the kitchen chimney and wriggle up until his head came level with the chimney pots.

Here, settling himself in a sitting attitude, with his knees and back thrust against the bricks, he could drop at a moment's warning either inside or outside as required.

Seyd advanced, with a grave seriousness, to the soldiers who had poured into the hall.

"Who lives here?" demanded the captain, gaily.

"My mistress, Badoura Bougala, Princess of Nournd, and me," replied the old man, his arms crossed on his breast submissively.

"A strange place for an Indian princess. How comes she here?" again demanded La Mort, with a loud laugh.

"We are but living in retirement," said the Gentoo, "with the permission of the owner of this house, because my mistress dislikes to mingle with Europeans until she has mastered their language."

"A pretty story, but not what we heard in the village near by. We were assured that a young man, wounded, a dwarf, four men and a lady had passed a certain house a week ago, and were surely in this house, for lights had been seen."

La Mort interrupted himself with a gasp, his eyes had fastened on the old man's arm, which could be seen through a rent in the muslin sleeve.

He looked with a consternation which was profound upon a delicately tattooed blood-red figure, which marked the inside of the elbow.

Seyd, with his eyes demurely downcast, had not seen his horror.

"There are no such persons here, sahib," said he.

"I do not wish to trouble your mistress," smiled La Mort, pleasantly, while a deadly glitter came into his eyes; "but I must see her, and search this house."

"Sahib, she is ill—she sees no one!"

"I won't disturb her long. It is utterly indispensable that I assure myself of the falsity of my informants, that I may chastise them for their malicious scandals upon a lady of your mistress's illustriousness. Go, prepare the princess to receive her humble servant, while I search these singular rooms."

So saying, and derisively laughing, the captain led his men through every apartment, finding nothing but disused furniture, bare pantry shelves, and cobwebs.

"Strange abode for such excellency and royalty!" ejaculated La Mort. "I must see this mysterious

being who lives on air. Perhaps I shall discover the cause of her illness to be starvation!"

Seyd, having been with Badoura long enough to assist her to finish the tableau, glided out and opened wide the chamber door.

La Mort waved back his men and entered alone.

CHAPTER XX.

But quenched to-night that ardent seems,
And pale his cheek and sunk his brow;
Never before but in her dreams
Had she beheld him pale as now.

Moore.

In a luxuriously furnished apartment stood a great bedstead, piled with bedding and covered with a rich crimson silk coverlet.

Upon this imperial dais reclined a beautiful girl, clad in a long white wrapper, confined at the neck, and flowing over her feet; her charming black hair swept over the pillows, and was held back from her brows by a white fillet.

She appeared to be asleep, but at the sudden intrusion she turned her face, and uttered a terrified cry.

"Madame, do not be afraid!" said La Mort, gazing insolently on the charming beauty; "I shall hold such innocence sacred; but I am impelled to make due search for a traitor who may be secreted here."

Badoura affected not to understand, but shrieked for Seyd, and in Hindostanee demanded to know the reason for this unexplained intrusion.

Seyd, in the same language, burst into a volley of assurances that it was only a fern, and that she, being perfectly innocent of that they suspected her of, need not be alarmed.

La Mort, by his puzzled expression, showed that he both understood and was surprised at this colloquy.

Having by this time examined the apartment, he approached the couch, and cordially requested her to rise.

She turned pallid with concealed despair, and began to weep; and Seyd tremblingly besought La Mort to remember her illness, and spare her.

In the midst of the altercation a strange gasp faintly mingled.

Badoura heard and understood it, and drowned it in a piercing scream of terror.

"Come, come, mistress! he won't hurt you!" Seyd hastened to cry, seizing her hands, for she was tearing at the silken coverlet.

"Let me alone, Seyd!" shrieked she, believing that she heard the dying gasp of Hereward.

But Seyd seized her in his arms, and, lifting her from the couch, with an air of haughty indignation requested La Mort to hasten with his duty and allow him to place his dying mistress in her bed again.

Perplexed, yet suspicious, La Mort tore off the upper clothes, but found no one; felt the downy bed in vain, then, unheeding his sword, stabbed it through and through a dozen times.

Seyd, covering the convulsed face of Badoura, hid from her this sight, but quailed at every stroke himself, and still kept chattering on, lest another sigh from Hereward might be heard.

"He is not here!" said La Mort, disappointed, and turning away.

The old man put his mistress on the bed and flung the crimson coverlet over her.

"Now, sahib, leave us," said he, putting on an outraged look; "my mistress may never recover from this fright. Begone, I say, at once."

And he followed La Mort from the room, omitting not to bewail loudly the cruel effects this alarm would have upon Princess Badoura all the time the soldiers were leaving the house.

None too loudly either, for no sooner had the doors closed than Badoura bounded from the couch, and with frantic hands dragged off the heavy bedding which entombed the youth.

And when she had pushed the boards aside and looked upon his pale, foam-flecked lips and livid eyelids, shriek after shriek rent the air, and she flung herself upon the breathless body, reckless now of discovery.

The soldiers paused in the park below on hearing those piercing cries.

La Mort looked up with a kindling eye at the lanopanned window, and took his foot from the stirrup.

Seyd raised his eyes to the heavens with a hypocritical expression of grief, and beat his breast, uttering a long-drawn howl.

"Alas, honourable masters, you have brought on her malady again," he moaned, stamping about. "My poor mistress will now be insane again!"

At this moment Badoura appeared at the broken pane, with a fearfully distorted face, and her eyes starting from their sockets.

"Oh, Seyd, he is dead! Oh! oh! light of my soul! my sahib, oh!" she screamed.

"Her bridegroom who was murdered the night of their marriage," wept the Gentoo, sinking on his knees beside La Mort; "she thinks these are the soldiers who killed him in Bengal. Go, go, I beseech you, for the sight of you maddens her."

La Mort could not but acknowledge that frenzy was in the Hindoo lady's face. He sprang into his saddle and cantered off, somewhat ashamed of having terrified her so completely.

Seyd flew to the chamber; Slygreen, hearing the piercing shriek, dropped down from his observatory and hastened thither too.

Badoura had torn the inanimate body out of the niche where they had laid him—she was holding him in her arms close to the window, and as she pressed the heavy head to her bosom she raved in the extremity of her despair:

"Oh, Hereward, sahib! oh, love of my soul! oh, star of my spirit! have I killed thee? Smothered my beloved with my own wicked body! Hereward, sahib, you do not answer—you are dead! Ah, then, I will be your widow and die to do you honour!"

She plucked from her bosom the jewelled dagger which Lucia de Chastelard had given Hereward, for Watt had rescued it from the soldiers who had captured his master, and had given the precious souvenir into the keeping of the Indian girl while in the cave; and she threw back her beautiful head, and raised her arm with the weapon flashing point downwards.

But Seyd and Watt Slygreen rushed forward and prevented the frantic blow.

"Stop!" shouted Seyd, in Hindostanee. "Sweet mistress, he may recover."

"Stop!" shouted Watt, in English. "My blessed master can't be dead—by the powers, no!" and he stripped the cold bosom and began to chafe it furiously.

"Rub the life into him; burn cayenne to make him energe! run, woman, and get water; do something to help him," bawled Watt, glancing around him, and beginning to sob like a child.

Badoura ran like the wind to obey him.

They stripped him to the waist and began to rub him as if he had been drowned.

How still he lay! How like a perfect bust of Apollo he looked, and his leaden face, so grandly calm, seemed as if he were saying:

"Cease, poor mortals; I have passed from suffering and am immortal."

Badoura returned—a spectral woman, with white robes and distended eyes—and while dashing water plentifully upon him she stooped and kissed his cheek.

Her dark orbs were the saddest sight on earth—insanity looked out of them.

But hark! see there! Was there not a sigh? Was there not a tremor?

"More water! Stay, let us breathe into his nostrils," she exclaimed.

Badoura breathed lightly, delicately as a zephyr—his breast lifted.

"Again, ah, quickly, do that once more," ejaculated Watt.

Stronger she breathed into the waxen nostrils, and his breast heaved twice with a gentle, gentle respiration.

A moisture stole over the glazed eyes, a rose-pink brushed o'er the ivory lips—he breathed without aid.

Oh, happy nut-brown maid, the star of your spirit shall look down upon you once more, once more.

Oh, Watt, good servitor, the world is not darkened for you yet. You can whisper as ecstatically as you please:

"Saved! saved!"

Seyd Ally piously thanked the deities of his nation one by one, and put Hereward's feeble hand upon his banded head.

Badoura received his first wandering glance and fainted away.

(To be continued.)

SIMLA.—From immemorial times certain wild tracks through the mountains have served as a highway between the bleak steppes of Tibet and the sunny slopes of the lower ranges of the Himalaya. The wild herdsmen of the dimly known land beyond the snows cross to-day, as they did before William the Conqueror landed in England, over the Niti Pass and the wild currents of the Sutlej, through the pretty villages of Nagkunda and Motluana, through the pine-forest of Fagn, and over the Mashobra Hills, to exchange their butter and bear-skins for grain and knives. On a mountain, warmly wrapped in pine and rhododendron, and honeycombed with deep valleys, stands a quaint little red wooden town, wandering up a hillside, and running for some distance along its crest. It stands about fifty miles deep in the mountains from the nearest plains, and to reach it you have to climb many a hill and cross many a brawling torrent. It must have been the obscurest little city in the world, only known to the eagles and swallows who dance for ever over the valleys. One would suppose that a traveller might have looked for it in vain among the thousand hills of the Himalaya till his hair turned gray; so, indeed, many a one might;

but a different fate awaited it. An Englishman in search of a sanitarium found it, after it had hidden itself successfully for—one does not like to say how many hundred years; ay, found it, and within a few years forced it to take a very prominent place among the pleasant places of the earth. The little town is now one of the capitals of the greatest empire in the world. Subject princes, mighty western nobles, and travellers from every country, are seen in its narrow bazaars. Long lines of camels and caravans of oxen-carts are unceasingly, for six months of every year, pouring into it the luxuries of Hindostan and the magnificent comforts of Europe. A thousand beautiful villas look down upon it from the surrounding hills, and on the splendid roads which lead from it in every direction may be seen of a summer evening a wonderful show of fashion and beauty—the *crème de la crème* of England in Asia.

SCIENCE.

BROWN TINT FOR IRON AND STEEL.—Dissolve in four parts of water, two parts of crystallised chloride of iron, two parts of chloride of antimony and one part of gallic acid, and apply the solution with a sponge or cloth to the article, and dry it in the air. Repeat this any number of times, according to the depth of colour which it is desired to produce. Wash with water and dry, and finally rub the articles over with boiled linseed oil. The metal thus receives a brown tint and resists moisture. The chloride of antimony should be as little acid as possible.

WATERPROOF STARCH.—A patent has been granted in France for the preparation of a starch, or starch, for vegetable tissues, yarns, &c., which is not soluble in water, and which, therefore, when once applied, will remain throughout several successive washings. The articles are first properly starched, then passed through a bath of chloride of zinc (about 60 deg. Fahr.), by means of which such a change is produced in the fibre and the starch that the latter resists the action of the water in the most thorough manner. A bath of three parts of sulphuric acid and one of water may, it is said, be used instead of that of chloride of zinc. The liquid is to be placed in a trough, in which a revolving barrel is immersed, almost to its axis, and above which is a roller which is moved in an opposite direction by the turning of the lower one. Between the two the material to be impregnated is passed, being moistened from below by the bath, and receiving during its passage the necessary pressure. If the material is heavy, the barrel lies entirely in the bath, and a pair of rollers, fixed above it, are used to press out the superfluous liquid. The articles are carried directly from the trough into running water, from which they are to be removed, pressed out, and dried.

SILICATE PAINT.—A curious deposit of almost pure silica was recently discovered in one of the hills in North Wales. The deposit lies in a basin of volcanic origin, at a considerable level above the sea, and forms the bed of a small lake about two miles in length and one mile in width. Amongst its uses it is stated that it would be especially suited for producing crystal glass, and in the manufacture of porcelain, especially if the small percentage of oxide of iron were removed from it. At present the only use made of this silica is in the production of paint. For this purpose it is especially suitable, as it mixes freely with the pigments and oils, and is worked with ease. Moreover, it entirely resists the action of heat. Added to these advantages are those no less important that the paint has no metallic base in its composition, and when laid on it becomes extremely hard and polished on the surface. The proprietors of this deposit have for some little time past been producing this paint at the works of the Silicate Paint Company, Fenwick Street, Liverpool, and extended trials have been obtained with it. Time is necessary to establish the correctness of what is stated about this paint, but it seems deserving of trial.

INFLUENCE OF GREEN LIGHT ON THE SENSITIVE PLANT.—M. Bert, desiring to test the effect of green light on the sensitiveness of the *mimosa*, placed several plants under bell-glasses of different-coloured glass, and set them in a warm greenhouse. At the end of a few hours a difference was apparent. Those which had been subjected to green, yellow, or red light had the petals erect and the leaflets expanded; those under blue and violet glass, on the other hand, had their petals almost horizontal and the leaflets hanging down. Those under blackened glass were less sensitive in a week, and in twelve days were either dead or dying. At that time those under green glass were entirely insensitive, and in four days more were dead. At this time the plants under the other glasses were perfectly healthy and sensitive, but there was a great deal of inequality; the white had made great progress, the red less, the

yellow a little less still, whilst the violet and the blue did not appear to have grown at all. After sixteen days the vigorous plants from the uncoloured bell-glasses were moved to the green; in eight days they had become less sensitive, in two more the sensitiveness had almost entirely disappeared, and in another week they were all dead. Green rays of light appear, from these experiments, to have no greater influence on vegetation than complete absence of light. M. Bert further believes that the sensitive plant exhibits only the same phenomena as do all plants which are coloured green, but to an excessive degree.

TEMPERATURE OF THE SUN.—M. St. Claire Deville thus closes a valuable essay on the subject of high temperatures, recently communicated to the Paris Academy of Sciences:—"To speak of excessive temperatures and of their measurement is to admit that gases are indefinitely dilatable or compressible by heat, which has not been demonstrated; or else, which is still farther from being demonstrated, that there is no limit to the temperature produced by chemical combinations. In doubt of this, I hold the opinion, founded on my long experience of very high temperatures, that the temperatures which we produce and measure in our laboratories are not far surpassed in nature. To speak of the surface of the sun is to suppose that he resembles a red-hot ball. To speak of the temperature at the surface of the solar atmosphere is to suppose that that atmosphere is bounded abruptly by an incandescent layer. Lastly, to calculate the temperature of any point of the sun's mass by photometric, actinometric, or other modes of measurement, is absolutely to neglect the effect of the possibly very extended layer of non-luminous solar matter which, according to all appearances, is superposed on the incandescent layer, and whose radiation towards the earth is thus neglected. All such calculations can relate only to the quantity of heat emitted from the whole sun, and not to the temperature at his surface. Here is a method by which, perhaps, the question can be approached. The lines of hydrogen emitted from certain points of the glowing solar matter are determined by astronomical observations. Frankland and Lockyer have found these rays in the light of hydrogen subjected to a certain pressure. We might determine the temperature of combustion of hydrogen at this pressure, and consequently the temperature and pressure of the gases at those points of the solar atmosphere where these hydrogen lines have been observed. In accordance with my first estimates, I believe that this temperature will not be found far removed from 2,500 or 2,800 degrees, the numbers which result from the experiments of M. Bunsen and those published long ago by M. Debray and myself."

THE COMING COMET.

WEAK-NERVED people, as it is credibly stated, have been put to great anxiety by the announcement, which recently appeared in the papers, that a distinguished astronomer had discovered a monstrous comet rushing straight towards us with amazing rapidity from the remote abysses of space, and yet pursuing its course with as little tendency to deviation as though it were running upon rails. Some friendly planet might by possibility put forth a helping hand, and twist the approaching monster from its course, as the hero of a novel diverts the runaway steed just as it is about to crush the heroine. Good-natured astronomers have taken pains to explain that there is no such comet coming; that, if it were coming, it would be a very welcome visitor; and that we have already passed through a comet, and found it less obnoxious than a London fog.

The astronomers mean well, but they are terribly prosaic people. They ought surely to understand that they are robbing us of a lively pleasure. Have they not in their boyhood—for even astronomers have been boys—snatched a fearful joy from the ghosts and other supernatural dangers with which a childish imagination loves to people the dim borders of its little world? Would anybody willingly give up that delicious feeling of superstitious awe which was at once the charm and terror of his early years, and have all phantoms suppressed till the world should be no more haunted than a railway station? Astronomers have already taken terrible liberties with the comets of our childhood. The huge fiery monster plunging through the sky with a death-dealing tail has been weighed and measured, and had, as it were, a mathematical hook put in its jaws, till its impressiveness has departed from him.

We know the legend of Cuvier's descent into the infernal regions, and of his declaration that the horns and hoofs which terrified our infancy were unmistakable proofs of a gaminivorous nature. Even so the comet has been lowered in popular estimation till our skies have become as empty of horrors as Hyde Park of tigers. Sir W. Thompson, indeed, was kind enough last autumn to revive some of our an-

cient alarms, and to assure us that, some time or other, the world would be smashed to atoms, like a bursting shell, by a fate as inexorable as that which will bring about a collision at a metropolitan junction. Of course his fellow philosophers found fault with some of his details, for science is a remorseless enemy to poetry.

Let us, however, for a brief period "dally with false surmise," and endeavour to return to the simple faith of a child. Let us imagine that the astronomer has really prophesied our approaching fate, and that the prophecy is correct. Within a few weeks we shall be able, without the help of telescopes, to see the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, and fraught with omens more dreadful than have ever before affrighted the human race. "It will grow, slowly at first, but afterwards with a rate of increase almost perceptible to our naked vision, till at last the whole sky will be lit up with the fiery portent. Night by night we shall watch its terrible growth, and before long it will be brilliant enough to outshine the sun himself. The temperature will rise to be first tropical, and then hotter than anything that is endured in the hottest room of a Turkish bath. But the time during which we shall be conscious of excessive heat will be brief indeed. The two large bodies, plunging towards each other at a pace compared with which the speed of a cannon-ball is absolute rest, will crash into each other with a hideous collision. If we happen to be placed between two such antagonists we shall not have time even for an ejaculation. The petty race of insects that crawls amongst the little excrescences on the earth's skin will be instantaneously dismissed from existence. On the other side of the world we shall, perhaps, have just one flash of sensation. We shall see the mountains, without any metaphor, skipping like rams, and be ourselves sent spinning into space just as the dust—to indulge in an humble simile—is knocked off the under side of a carpet by the blows upon its upper surface.

PRODUCTION OF STEAM IN BOILERS.

The economical and safe production of steam in iron boilers is, in this steam-using age, a matter of primary importance; notwithstanding which, it is somewhat astonishing how little is generally known of the principles which must be observed to secure both safety and economy.

The theories and speculations indulged in by various authors in regard to the precise nature of the molecular motion produced in solid, liquid, and gaseous bodies by the agency of heat, have—at least until they are subjected to experiment—no practical value. We must seek light alone from such facts as are demonstrated, and be guided solely by that light.

The only motion that takes place in heated water with which the steam-maker has to do is that caused by the difference in the specific gravities of the molecules by unequal heating. The motion in steam which the steam-user needs to comprehend is that caused by the mutual repulsion of the heated particles of water in a gaseous state.

When heat is first applied to water the heated particles rise because their specific gravity is lessened. Other particles are in turn heated and give place to others, and so successive strata of particles are heated over and over, till at last some of them arrive at the required temperature to expand into gas. In assuming this form that portion of water so converted takes suddenly, under atmospheric pressure, a little more than four and one-half times as much heat as it previously had, which heat disappears as temperature or sensible heat, and, becoming latent, imparts its expansive energy to the steam, a small part of which energy is subsequently converted into work in the engine to which the steam is supplied. In thus suddenly absorbing so much heat it as suddenly expands to a much greater volume than it previously occupied, causing upheaval of the superstratum of fluid; and, rising to the top, it escapes with such rapidity as to cause bubbling, a state of things we call ebullition or boiling.

Now in the construction of steam boilers we have to consider only these simple and elementary facts, with such modifications as arise from pressures above that of the atmosphere, and the expansion of metals by heat; and we must provide that the movements which take place naturally in steam generation shall not be artificially interfered with. Neglecting these provisions, we fail in economy, and increase the danger of steam production.

The water must have free circulation, and the steam must have ample avenues of escape from the liquid. Then if the boiler can withstand safely a given pressure and the strains caused by unequal expansion, and if the steam finds a ready escape from the boiler before that limit of pressure is reached, we have, so far as the boiler proper is concerned, the required conditions for economy and safety.

But to generate steam we must generate heat, and here the element of economy is the one most important to be considered. To get the greatest available amount of heat from the combustion of a given quantity of fuel we must obey the law that governs all chemical combinations, the law of definite proportions in the union of substances to form other substances. Combustion is only such a chemical combination. Every pound of carbon in the coal, wood, peat, or other combustible, will require for its perfect combustion two and two-thirds pounds of oxygen. Every pound of hydrogen will require eight pounds of oxygen to form nine pounds of water, and to develop in the combination all the available latent heat of the two substances. If not enough oxygen be admitted in the draft there will be imperfect combustion and the loss of carbon in the form of smoke which passes into the uptake.

Again, it is important that the carbonic acid, caused by the burning of the coal, and the steam which arises from the union of the hydrogen of the coal with the oxygen of the air should have the heat as far as possible extracted from them and passed through the shell of the boiler into the water and steam confined therein, and that as little as possible should be wasted through the uptake or by radiation from the furnace or boiler. But now a little thought renders it evident that, as heat always passes from a warmer to a colder body, if the gases in the uptake are cooled down to the temperature of the steam on the other sides of the plates over which they pass, that must be the extreme limit to which their heat can be economically extracted. Steam at 60 lbs. above atmospheric pressure has a temperature of 307 degs. F.; therefore if a boiler carries steam at this pressure, and its circulation is perfect, it is useless to attempt to get any heat from gases at the temperature named. Practically it is impossible to work down the gases of combustion to the extreme theoretical limit at which they will pass into the chimney at the same temperature as that of the steam in a well-constructed boiler.

But to insure perfect combustion it is necessary not only to admit oxygen in the right quantity, but to give the combining materials the proper temperature, and to so combine them that they shall combine and develop their heat before they have passed over the surfaces to be heated. Combustion in the chimney is waste, and a waste too often to be observed with ill-constructed and arranged furnaces. The oxygen entering in the usual way is cold, and, before it will support combustion, has to be heated. To effect this in the most thorough manner it is far better that the draft should be diffused, that is, enter at many points rather than at one. This accelerates both the heating and the commingling of the air with the unconsumed gases.

PROPOSED TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FROM THE FRENCH PEOPLE.—A beautiful model of the Hôtel de Ville has been presented to the Lord Mayor of London by the Prefect of the Seine, in commemoration of the aid sent to Paris after the siege. This was the act of the municipality of Paris. A subscription has been now opened in Paris for a national present to the people of England for the relief sent to France during the war and after the siege had terminated, and it is proposed that it should take the form of a grand painting, to be executed by a French artist, chosen after competition, the names of the subscribers to be bound in rich volumes, and enclosed in a beautiful piece of cabinet-work.

LOCAL TAXATION IN IRELAND.—Dr. Hancock, in his annual Report on Local Taxation in Ireland, gives the "unlike estimated receipts of Irish authorities in charge of Local Taxation in 1870" as 2,728,327, being 19,450 less than 1869. The distribution of this taxation as to the sources from which it arises is as follows:—Rates on land and buildings, 84 per cent.; other local taxes, 16 per cent.; miscellaneous, 8 per cent. The corresponding percentages in England are 72½, 16½, and 11. The rates on rateable property may be estimated at 8s. 6d. in the pound in Ireland, and 3s. 4d. in the pound in England, the apparent discrepancy being accounted for by the difference in the mode of valuation. The receipts from Local Taxation in Ireland amounted to 10s. 8d. per head of the population, and with 8s. 6d. additional for amount contributed from the general taxes of the United Kingdom for police in Ireland beyond the sum so contributed for police in England and Wales the amount would be 18s. 4d. per head in Ireland, against 11. 1s. 1d. in England and Wales.

HOPELESSLY MIXED.—Those who expect to be heirs to fortunes should be careful how they marry, else they get so mixed up that their relatives will not know how to leave them anything. Take for instance, this case of an unfortunate: "I married a widow who had a grown-up daughter. My father visited our house very often, and fell in love with

my step-daughter, and married her. So my father became my son-in-law, and my step-daughter my mother, because she was my father's wife. Some time afterwards my wife had a son—he was my father's brother-in-law and my uncle, for he was the brother of my step-daughter. My father's wife, i.e., my step-daughter, had also a son; he was, of course, my brother, and in the meantime my grandchild, for he was the son of my daughter. My wife was my grandmother, because she was my mother's mother. I was my wife's husband and grandchild at the same time. And as the husband of a person's grandmother is his grandfather, I was my own grandfather." H.

A VOW FULFILLED. A LEGEND OF SWEDEN.

ALONE in the palace of Stockholm sat the Princess Ulrica of Sweden, and her faithful friend the Countess Emelinde of Schoenberg. The clock upon the staircase had nearly told the hour of midnight, and the lights, that had shone so merrily over the gay throng in the audience chamber, had long since been extinguished; of all in the palace only Ulrica and her friend kept watch and ward. Bred up together in childhood, the widowed and childless Countess of Schoenberg had returned to her friend, after the grave had closed over her loved ones, to meet the sympathetic kindness her bruised heart yearned for. On the morrow they were to separate again, the countess going to Saxony, to retirement among the peasants on the count's broad estate.

As the last stroke of the midnight bell died away the princess laid her hand solemnly on the Holy Book on the little stand before her.

"You promise, Emelinde?" she said, anxiously.

The countess raised her head, and, laying her hand upon her friend's, repeated, slowly:

"I promise that this night twelve months I will meet the Princess Ulrica in this palace, Heaven helping me."

Ulrica smiled and said:

"I believe thee, Emelinde; go now to rest, dear friend, and the saints guard thee and keep thee."

The countess kissed the hand extended to her, repeatedly, and with a murmured half-prayer, half-farewell, glided from the apartment.

Ulrica, left alone, walked slowly to the window, and, drawing the heavily fringed curtains, looked out. The night was clear and frosty; the stars glittered like diamond drops in the blue ether, and the wind sighed through the leafless branches and whirled the dried leaves in the churchyard. The princess shivered and drew her furred mantle closer about her slender figure.

"This night twelve months," she said, thinking aloud, "who knows if I shall be here to meet thee, Emelinde?—or, perchance, thou wilt keep watch beside a grave," she added, after a pause, laying her hand upon her heart as if to still a sharp pain.

With a sigh that had in it a sound of relief, Ulrica dropped the curtain, folded her mantle over her bosom and stepped softly into her sleeping apartment.

The palace at Stockholm was filled with attendants moving noiselessly along the corridors with heavy hearts and tearful eyes. Stretched upon her couch lay the beloved Princess Ulrica. Death was written upon her pale brow and sunken eyes. She had lain seemingly insensible since morning, only the fluttering of the heart told that life had not deserted the frail tenement.

The short winter's day drew to a close; the sun went down in the far West, leaving only a train of glory behind. Ulrica opened her eyes, and her voice, weak, but clear, sounded strangely distant in the twilight that gathered in the stately room.

"Tell me how long it is since the messenger was despatched to Saxony, my good Christians," she asked of her favourite attendant.

"But three days, dear lady, only three, and, alas, as many weeks must pass before we can expect to see the Countess Emelinde of Schoenberg," answered the weeping nurse, carefully shading the taper from her mistress's eyes.

"And I have not as many hours to live," said Ulrica, quietly; "the vow must be broken, unless we meet in Heaven's presence. My good friends, farewell. When the tomb has closed over me think kindly of Ulrica."

The weeping attendants kissed the pale hands tearfully, and all withdrew, except Christians, her devoted nurse. The princess slept, or appeared to do so, until about three o'clock, then with the name of Emelinde on her lips her heart ceased to beat.

All the next day the corpse lay in state in the audience room of the palace. All Stockholm pressed to take a last look at the features of the beloved princess. At evening the doors were closed, and the

Baron Frederic Whallenberg, one of the bravest in the field, and sargent in the council chamber, was appointed officer of the guard. The room in which the young officer kept his lonely watch was merely separated from the chamber where Ulrica lay by a glass partition. Full in his sight lay the royal corpse, surrounded by tapers.

The hours dragged wearily on. The young officer, wrapped in his cloak, paced the ante-room, busily following his own train of thought, when, as the clock on the staircase struck twelve, his reverie was broken by the unusual sound, at that hour, of a carriage driven rapidly into the court-yard below. As the last stroke of the clock died away a figure, robed in deepest black, whom the Baron Frederic instantly recognized as the Countess Emelinde of Schoenberg entered the room, and proceeded to the inner chamber where lay her friend Ulrica.

"May it please you, my lady, but the princess's room is closed," said Baron Frederic, advancing towards her. "My orders are very strict that no one be admitted till morning. Nay, I pray you, do not attempt to enter that room; I cannot allow, even you, to infringe upon the orders I have received," and he stepped between the countess and the door.

But as he moved to oppose her entrance the lady extended her hand, and laid it, icy as that of the dead, upon his own.

With an instinctive shudder he drew back, and the countess glided by him. Straight to the coffin of the dead the dusky-robed figure passed as noiselessly as the snow falls at midnight. She knelt for a moment—and he rubbed his eyes to assure himself he was not dreaming; he saw the corpse rise and open its heavy eyelids—he saw the fixed, glittering stare of the eyes—he saw the arms crossed over the heart spread slowly and embrace the figure that half knelt beside it. He saw it all; no wonder that his brain reeled and the room swam and he sank fainting upon the floor.

The gray dawn was stealing through the eastern windows when the baron recovered. He looked anxiously and nervously about him, but the sable-robed lady had vanished. Ulrica lay still and statue-like within her coffin, but on her lips rested a beautiful smile, a happy, peaceful smile, replacing the convulsive contraction of the last agony, the only change the young officer could perceive in his charge.

Relieved of his watch by day-break, he communicated to his superior officer his singular experience, and summoned the servants of the palace. To all inquiries they could only answer that at midnight a mourning coach drawn by four black horses entered the court-yard. A female figure robed in black alighted and ascended the broad staircase. When she departed, or how, no one could tell. The sable coach and its sable-robed occupant had come and gone, leaving no trace behind, and the baron fancied he had been made the dupe of some conspiracy.

The princess was borne to the tomb of her race amid the tears of the people. Three weeks afterwards the messenger returned to Saxony, bringing tidings of the death of the Countess Emelinde of Schoenberg. Subsequent inquiries proved that on the very night and hour that the countess was seen to enter the Princess Ulrica's apartment—the anniversary of their mutual vow to meet each other—she expired at Schoenberg.

In one of the churches at Stockholm the traveller will see carved, in rude brass relieve on a royal tomb, what apparently represents the joyful meeting of two friends, but one wears a shroud, and the faces are lifeless and inanimate.

On inquiry the aged sacristan will tell the strange story of Princess Ulrica and her friend, averring that on the anniversary of the death of Ulrica these figures become animated at the midnight hour. However this may be, there are many who believe it; and a descendant of Baron Frederic Whallenberg still preserves the legend as a family inheritance. M. B. E.

A CURIOUS sale of autographs has just taken place at Leipzig. Letters of Goethe ranged from 49 fr. to 85 fr.; Byron, 88 fr.; Casanova, 27 fr.; Lionnais, 31 fr.; J. J. Rousseau, 60 fr.; Schiller, 45 fr.; Walter Scott, 26 fr.; Voltaire, 75 fr.; Young, 77 fr.; Sebastian Bach, 83 fr.; and Garriek, 75 fr. The original score of the "Invitation à la Valse," by Weber, was sold for 370 fr.

ASPARAGUS CULTURE.—Asparagus for market (says the *Field*) is generally blanched by the earthing-up system, which is done by covering the crowns with a few inches of light soil, generally taken from the space between the rows, by which process we obtain the white bleached or blanched roots daily seen during the season in the London market. When this method is adopted the grass must be cut below the surface just as it appears above ground. This mode, however, is not to be commended, the right way being, not to practise

the earthing-up system, but to wait till the shoots are 6 inches above ground, when they may be cut over almost level with the surface. By so doing we obtain the asparagus in its green and natural condition, and of exquisite flavour, to which the blanched can bear no sort of comparison.

CURIOUS HABITS OF SWALLOWS.

I HAVE imbibed many of the tastes of Gilbert White, but that which engrosses me most, and I may call my hobby, is the natural history of the Swallow tribe. I have read that swallows will "mob" and put to flight a kestrel hawk. This I was rather sceptical of until lately, when my doubts were removed by that most convincing of proofs—ocular demonstration.

I had gone to see an old castle in the neighbourhood, which was built on the only hill for miles round, and therefore was tolerably certain to be the haunt of a pair or two of hawks. I accordingly kept my eyes open, in the expectation of seeing one, and I was soon rewarded by the appearance over the brow of the hill of a bird, which, by its graceful poise and the hovering motion of its wings, I knew to be a kestrel.

His active little enemies, the swallows, a flock of whom were disporting themselves close by, had been as quick to see him as I. These at once advanced to meet the intruder, and, with the utmost audacity brushed passed him in all directions, one from one quarter and one from another, each wheeling after it had swept by and returning to the charge, while the hawk made futile dashes now and again, but was always too late to do any damage to his nimble little opponents. At last, tired of waging an unequal war, and obliged to own himself conquered, he beat a hasty retreat.

He was not, however, allowed to get off so easily, but was followed up by his victorious foes; and the apparent mystery of such little birds proving more than a match for such a formidable-looking antagonist, armed literally *cap-à-pie* as he was, was quite cleared up; for as he made off, evidently at his best speed, the swallows, with the utmost ease, when left at an apparently hopeless distance behind, fetched him up, then passed him (in what appeared to me most dangerous proximity), wheeled round, met him on their return journey, and then, taking another sharp turn to the right-about, repassed him, and continued repeating these manoeuvres a dozen times or more.

The solution of the mystery lay in their extraordinary powers of flight. The way in which the swallows made straight for him, apparently bent on a personal encounter, and then, when the kestrel was reckoning on clutching them in his talons, gliding away at a tangent, was, though no doubt tantalizing to the hawk, none the less amusing and interesting to me.

To crown all, when the others had left off the chase, presumably not thinking it worth their while to pursue any farther, it was curious to watch one solitary individual carry it on alone with such seemingly unrelenting vigour that he seemed actuated by feelings of the direst revenge. C.

MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

As the night wore on the rain increased.

At half-past eleven, when Duke and Polly left the theatre, it was pitch dark and pouring torrents.

Polly did not mind the rain; in her strong young girlhood she had not had half a dozen colds in her lifetime, and she and Duke had a nice, long, muddy walk through the blackness.

Hackney coaches there were, but all had been monopolized by greater folks than the scene-painter and his cousin.

They trudged contentedly along, and who was to tell either that it was for the last time?—that with the new day, so near breaking, a new life was to dawn for this girl of sixteen?

Rosanna was up, waiting, with dry clothes, a good fire, and a cozy little supper. She was very tender with her charge now that she was going away to school.

Polly's spirits had risen with the walk in the fresh summer rain; they were too elastic to be long depressed, and her wound was only skin deep. She ate the toast and drank the weak tea Rosanna had prepared, and laughed once more about the "Prince of Pipes and Beersbad" in a way that did her hearers' hearts good, and tripped off, half an hour past midnight, to her own room, singing gaily as she went:

"And the best of all ways to lengthen your days
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear."

"Thank Heaven," Duke thought, fervently, "she

can laugh and sing again. It's a complaint everybody has, and everybody gets over."

Very true, Mr. Duke Mason, most people have it, and most people get over it. So, too, a great many of us take the small-pox; and some of us get well, and not a trace remains to tell that the odious disease has ever been; and others of us get well, and eat, and drink, and are merry, but the scars remain, cruel and deep, to the very last days of our lives!

The scene-painter, with a yawn, took up his bedroom candle, bade his sister good-night, and was turning to quit the room when there came such a knock at the front door as literally made him drop it again with amazement—a knock that echoed through the whole house, at a quarter to one, of a pouring, pitch-black June morning.

The master of the house looked at his sister aghast.

"Who can it be, Rosanna, at one o'clock in the morning?"

"Give me the light and I'll soon see," retorted the intrepid Rosanna; and, taking the candle her brother had dropped, she marched straight to the door and flung it open.

Whoever Miss Rosanna Mason thought to see it was evident she did not expect the visitor she beheld, for with a loud, startled cry she recoiled. At that cry Polly's curly head, peeping curiously over the banister, came down another step or two.

Duke from his place in the kitchen advanced, and there, standing on the threshold, drenched through, splashed with mud, pale as death, with wild eyes and disordered hair, he saw—Lady Charteris! Lady Charteris, alone, wet through, so far from home, and at that hour.

Some prophetic instinct made him understand all. He took the candle from his sister's hand, and whispered in her ear:

"For Heaven's sake, make Polly go to bed!"

Rosanna left obediently, awed by the sight of that awfully corpse-like face.

"Come in, Lady Charteris," Duke said, gravely. "You will get your death standing there in the rain. Are you alone?"

She did not answer the question.

She came in and stood before him in the warm, lighted kitchen, her wet garments dripping on the white floor, her loose hair falling about her face, her great black eyes fixed with spectral solemnity on the scene-painter.

"Duke Mason," she said, in a hoarse, unnatural sort of voice, "you have deceived me, and I trusted you! My husband is alive!"

"A dull, red glow leaped up in the dusky depths of her great eyes.

"I am not Lady Charteris," she said, in the same still, compressed tone, "and you know it! I have never for one hour had a right to that hated name. I am Robert Lisle's wife, and Robert Lisle is alive, and you know it."

"My lady—"

"You know it," she repeated. "You have deceived me long enough, all of you. I am no child. I will be deceived no longer. This night you shall tell me the truth. I have walked three miles through darkness and storm to hear the truth, and you shall speak it. On the day—the fatal day—upon which I stood at the altar, Sir Vane Charteris's bride, Robert, my Robert, my husband, my love, was in the church a witness to my perjury. You know it like the rest, and like the rest have hidden it from me—you who knew how I loved him—you whom I never wronged."

Her voice sank to an inexpressible pathos, her eyes looked at him unutterably sad, irresistibly reproachful.

Duke fairly gave way.

"I did, my lady—forgive me if you can. It was wrong—I thought so from the first, but what could I do? He bade me keep his secret from you—from you most of all on earth. What could I do but obey?"

"He—you mean—"

"I mean the man who called himself Robert Hawksley—who was Robert Lisle, as I know very well now, and your husband. You were out of England—he bound me by a promise never to reveal his existence if I chanced to meet you again. What could I do, my lady? I don't know how you have found this out, the whole thing is so confused that I hardly know which is the right and which is the wrong. I wanted to tell you that night in Montalien Park, but I feared—I feared! What right had I to tell you that you were the wife of two living husbands? So I held my peace. I am sorry for you, my lady—sorry from my inmost heart. I would help you, Heaven knows, if I could."

"You can!" she said, still retaining that deep, unnatural calm. "I have come to you for help. Twice before you aided me in my great need; now help me for the third time in a greater extremity still."

She held out both hands to him. He remembered the gesture—the very same as when she stood by the window of Lyndith Grange and implored him to aid her in her flight. As on that night he answered, more moved than he cared to show:

"I will help you if I can; tell me how, Lady Charteris."

"Not that name!" she cried, rising passion in her voice and face. "Never again that name! I loathe it, I abhor it, as I do the man that bears it! I am Olivia Lisle; oh, thank Heaven that I can say it! Thank Heaven that my darling lives, though I should never see his face again!"

She sank into a chair, and the womanhood within her gave way. She covered her face with her hands, and the room was filled with her anguished sobs—anguish that was still half-delirious joy.

He lived! Oceans rolled between them, leagues of land divided them—a deeper gulf than earth or ocean held them asunder—the probabilities that they would ever stand face to face again were as one in ten million—but he lived!

And the woman's heart yielded in such rushing tears, such wild sobs, as shook her from head to foot.

Duke felt dreadfully sorry for this unhappy lady; her tears and hysterics unmanned him, and made him nearly cry himself, but still he was thinking distractedly if anybody should find it out, if Sir Vane Charteris should unexpectedly appear, outraged, jealous, awful before him.

Visions of a dismal day-dawn, a lonesome field, somewhere down along the coast, pistols for two, and a vindictive baronet, a dead-shot, with his evil eyes upon him, listening for the fatal "One, two, three!"

Lady Charteris looked up at last. As on that other night, under the trees of Montalien, she commanded herself for his sake, and held back her passion of tears by the effort of self-repression that had become habitual to her. She held out her hand to him with a pathetic glance that went straight to his big, tender, honest heart.

"Forgive me, Mr. Mason," she said, sweetly; "it is weak and selfish of me to distress you, my best, my most faithful friend. I will not give way again. My own cowardice, my own pitiful weakness in fearing for my child, in wishing to regain her, in too readily believing the falsehoods told me of—of his death, have brought all this long misery upon me. I must bear it now to my life's close alone. But I must hear all you have to tell—all—every word he spoke, everything he did—everything you know. I am, I think, the most utterly wretched and lost creature this wide earth holds. There are times when I fancy I am almost mad. If you have any pity in your heart for one so miserable you will speak to-night and tell me the truth."

"I will tell you the truth, my lady," Duke answered, his voice full of great pity. "Heaven knows I would have told it you long ago if I had dared. A great wrong has been done—a great and cruel wrong. Whether it can ever be repaired now is not for me to say. The dead and the living are alike to blame. Geoffrey Lyndith and Sir Vane Charteris! They both knew, on your second wedding-day, that Robert Lisle was alive."

"Yes," she said, catching her breath spasmodically, and leaning forward in her eagerness; "go on!"

"It was at the church door I saw him first," the scene-painter continued. Duke was walking up and down the kitchen floor now, and his thoughts went back to that past time, the sunny April morning, the throng of carriages and people before St. George's, and Robert Hawksley's white face were vividly before him. "I cannot understand it myself, but some instinct told me who he was from the first. I knew but little of your story then, my lady, but I heard both yourself and Mr. Lyndith allude to a Robert Lisle, and when you gave me the child you said was yours I, of course, concluded that Robert Lisle had been your husband, and was dead. Yet on that morning, when we stood face to face, I remember the thought coming into my mind, 'What if this should be Robert Lisle in the flesh!' It was the look his face wore, I think, that first suggested the idea—a look I cannot describe—such a look as only a man in a case of the kind could by any possibility wear."

"We entered the church together. He asked me on the way if I knew who was to be married, and I told him. The ceremony was over when we went in a few seconds later, and you came down the aisle on Sir Vane Charteris's arm. You did not see us; you seemed to see nothing. Your eyes were fixed straight before you in a fixed, blank stare."

"He rose up as you drew near, and took a step forward, and his eyes met those of Sir Vane. I never saw such a change wrought in any human face as came over that of the baronet in that instant—it was an awful, ghastly horror that seemed to stun him."

"But the people pressing behind bore him on. Everybody left the church, and Robert Hawksley

and myself and the pew-openers were there alone."

"Hawksley!"

"He called himself Hawksley, my lady. I turned to him, and taxed him there and then with being Robert Lisle. 'My name is Hawksley,' he answered, 'and I must follow that man.'"

"We left the church together, called a hansom, and drove to your late uncle's house in Park Lane. I remained in the cab; he descended, and, after some trouble, was admitted, and your uncle came down in person, and they went into the library together."

"I remember! I remember!" my lady said, in a hushed, awe-stricken voice. "I remember the altercation in the hall, my uncle's leaving us at the table, and a strange hush of expectation falling upon us. Oh, Heaven!—to think that in that hour he was under the same roof with me—in that hour when it was not yet too late!"

"It was too late!" Duke Mason answered. "Had he insisted upon seeing you that very instant he would have been given over to the hands of the law to answer for a crime he had never committed. Yet I doubt if that would have held him back. He was made to believe that you abhorred his memory, that you believed him a thief, that you had grown to love Sir Vane Charteris, that if you knew the truth, the shame, the anguish of publicity would break your heart. He was told that the marriage was no marriage, and would be so proven if he made any attempt to see or speak to you. It was too late, my lady. Your uncle triumphed."

"Robert Lisle left the house, and fell like a dead man in the street before he had gone ten steps. I took him home, my sister cared for him, and next day, as we sat alone together, he told me his story."

"He believed what Geoffrey Lyndith had said—that you were utterly false and faithless. My lady, I knew better. I could not bear to hear you so accused, and, right or wrong, told him all I knew."

"It was then that he learnt that the little child prattling about the house was his. I believe that knowledge saved him from a suicide's grave, it gave him something to live for. Where you were concerned all hope was at an end—his mind was made up to leave England again at once and for ever. His last words were of little Polly. 'She shall be an heiress yet,' he said as we shook hands and parted. Every year since that time he has sent her a Christmas token of fifty pounds, and a few short lines to ask if she were well. There, my lady, is the story of Robert Hawksley as I know it. May I ask how you have learnt that he is alive?"

She was sitting, leaning forward, her hands clasped tightly together in speechless pain, her large dark eyes full of untold despair. In a few quiet words she repeated the story Lord Montalien had told at the dinner table that evening.

"I remember listening," she said, almost dreamily, "with a feeling as of tightening around my heart, knowing from the first that it was of my Robert he spoke. When he uttered his name at the last the tension seemed suddenly to give way—a great darkness came before me, the room, the chairs seemed reeling, and I fainted. I was in my own room when I recovered, with my maid and the housekeeper and Sir Vane Charteris (for the first time in fourteen years) beside me. I looked at him and pointed to the door: 'Go out of my room,' I said, 'and never come into it again as long as you live.' The two women looked at each other; no one spoke. He went at once, then for hours and hours it seemed to me I lay there alone. I don't believe I suffered—all the troubles of my life appeared to fade away—my mind was almost a blank. I remember looking at the pictures on the wall, at the pattern on the carpet, at the wax lights burning on the table, with an almost painful intensity of interest. I remember trying to count the rain drops pattering on the glass. I even believe I slept for a time, then, all at once, I was sitting up in bed, cold as death, with great drops standing on my face, repeating aloud, 'Robert is alive! Robert is alive!' My maid came in from the next room, with a frightened face, looking at me as though she thought me mad. I sprang from the bed, seized a shawl lying near, and rushed out of the room and the house. I ran all the way down to the gates, they were open still, by some chance, and I came straight here. I never felt the rain. I suppose I was mad—perhaps I am yet."

She put her hand to her head in a dazed sort of way.

Duke Mason looked at her in alarm; her face was as white as the face of a corpse; her eyes shone with a dry, bright glitter; her voice was strangely quiet and slow; she spoke of herself as though speaking of another. The hysterics were nothing to this. Had her troubles turned her brain? Should he summon Rosanna?

Before he could answer his own mental question a carriage driven furiously stopped at the door.

He heard it flung open with a crash; a man's heavy step sounded in the hall. The next instant the kitchen door was thrown wide open, and Sir Vane Charteris stood before them!

Once again Duke's thoughts flew back fourteen years to the Speckhaven waiting-room, at the same abnormal hour, and Geoffrey Lyndith standing dark and grim as Sir Vane Charteris stood now.

Once again with the same gesture the hunted lady lifted her head and looked her pursuer full in the face.

The usually florid countenance of the baronet was faded now to a dull, livid pallor. There was a look about his mouth and eyes not good to see.

"Lady Charteris," he said, grimly, "come home!"

He advanced towards her. She shrank back—both arms outstretched—with a scream of fear and horror.

"Don't touch me!" she cried. "Don't come near me! Don't call me by that name! I am not your wife—I never was. In the hour you married me you knew my lawful, my only husband was alive! You told me he was dead—you false, false, false villain!"

He listened with a diabolical smile, his glittering, sinister eyes never leaving her wild face.

"Have you quite done, madam? This sort of performance is entertaining enough with the stage lights and appropriate costumes, and at a suitable hour; but allow me to suggest that at one o'clock in the morning Lady Charteris should be at home and in bed. This is the scene-painter, I suppose," he added, with a sneering look at Duke, "to whom you gave that fellow Lisle's illegit—"

She uttered a cry, and half sprang towards him.

"If you dare!" she gasped. "You said it once. Take care! take care!"

"Ah! I remember," he replied, with sneering scorn. "You don't like the word. I said it once more than thirteen years ago, I remember very distinctly. I told you it was not an agreeable recollection for me that I had married the mistress of a country clod, and from that hour to this we have been man and wife only in name. Is Mr. Robert Lisle's interesting daughter and heiress visible, Mr.—ah—Mason? I suppose not, though, at this hour. I should really like to see her, but that pleasure must be reserved for another time. Now, my lady, take my arm!"

He looked at her with a terrible glance. She shrank away, trembling from head to foot.

"Take my arm!" he repeated, still with that basilisk stare, "and come home. Home! Do you know the sort of home provided for such women as you?"

She did not speak. Her eyes looked up at him full of a great horror as he added:

"A madhouse!"

He literally hissed the words, a world of hatred and rage in his black eyes. As he spoke he drew her shrinking hand within his own, and forced her towards the door.

She went without a single word. On the threshold she looked back once at the humble, faithful friend she was leaving, who stood so powerless to help her now. It was her farewell.

So Duke Mason saw her in his dreams, for years and years after, with that look of unutterable horror on her death-cold face. So for years and years that farewell look haunted him with much the same remorse as though he had stood by and seen her slain before his eyes.

CHAPTER XXV.

On the stately turrets and ivy-grown towers of Montalien Priory, and on the two-story wooden box of Mr. Duke Mason, the light of a new and glorious day shone.

The storm had passed with the night. The June sunshine flooded sky and earth, the birds sang blithely, the busy town was astir, and at his painting-room window Duke Mason sat, gazing blankly out and seeing nothing but darkness and desolation.

He was going to lose the Duchess. Polly—his bright, beautiful, laughing, mischievous, troublesome, loving little Polly—was going from him to return no more. For fourteen happy years she had been the joy, the torment, the delight of his life—now she was to be taken from him. And what remained? He had intended to send her away to school himself, it was true, but that sort of separation would have been different. She would still have been his, belonging to his world, and one day she would have come back to lighten their dull, gray-coloured life with her sunshine presence again. But now she was Lord Montalien's ward, and heiress of eighty thousand pounds, and as lost to him almost as though the coffin lid had closed upon her.

He sat there, unshorn and unwashed, neither handsome nor interesting to look at, but with a sorrow as profound, a despair as great, as the veriest hero of romance could ever feel.

He had not been to bed all night. He and Rosanna had sat side by side in the little kitchen while the storm clouds cleared away and the rosy morning broke, not talking, but with the same thoughts

uppermost in both minds—Polly was going, and for ever.

Wofully gray and grim Rosanna looked in this new day's sunshine, but she went about her work without fear or sigh, hiding her trouble deep in her heart, as few women do, and feeling it all the more bitterly.

Upstairs, with her flushed cheek resting on one rounded arm, and her sunny curls on the pillow, Polly slept, while her new life dawned with the new day.

"Who was that came at such an unearthly hour last night?" she asked at breakfast. "I heard doors banging and people talking till daybreak, it seemed to me. And here you and Duke look as solemn as a pair of white owls this morning. Rosanna, what is it all about?"

They put her off with some evasive answer. It was impossible to tell her. The blow must come, but it was beyond their strength to inflict it themselves. It was selfish, perhaps; but are we not all selfish in our love and our sorrow?

The morning mail brought Duke a letter—a foreign letter—and enclosing a brief note addressed to "Paulina Lisle." Duke laid it aside—that name smote him like a blow—and read his own. No words could be more manly, more grateful, more kindly than those of Robert Lisle, but the decree of parting was irrevocable. By birth and fortune Paulina was a lady. As such she had her place to fill in society—in that world to which Lord Montalien, as her guardian, could present her. It was all quite right, Duke felt it plainly as any one, but the pang was none the less bitter, the pain none the less acute. He sat there for hours, with that open letter in his hand.

Rosanna sat idly by the kitchen fire—and when had Rosanna been idle before? Polly had gone to make an early call upon her friend Alice, and talk about her new clothes and her new school prospects. The ticking of the old clock sounded preternaturally loud in the blank stillness. Such was the position of affairs when at half-past eleven Lord Montalien reached the house and knocked at the door.

Rosanna's face betrayed no surprise when she admitted her distinguished visitor. Yes, she answered, Mr. Duke Mason lived here, and was disengaged, and would see him. She ushered the peer into the humble parlour, and Duke got up, and put his letter in his pocket, and went slowly downstairs.

"I see by your face, Mr. Mason," his lordship said, quietly, "that you know the errand upon which I have come. You have had a letter from California this morning's post."

"I have, my lord."

"It is doubtless painful to you to part with your adopted daughter after all those years, but the thing is inevitable. In any case you must have lost her sooner or later. Mr. Lisle is unbounded in his expressions of gratitude and respect for you. Have you told her yet—does she know?"

"She knows nothing, my lord—I cannot tell her!" Some of poor Duke's pain was in his voice and face as he spoke. "She thinks still, as she has thought from the first, that she is the child of a dead cousin of my own. You will kindly undeceive her—you will tell her the truth. It will not be a hard task, such pleasant news!"

He spoke a little bitterly—his heart was very sore.

Lord Montalien looked at him kindly.

"I am quite sure that the young lady will sincerely regret the change of guardians; the news is pleasant, beyond doubt, but she will not leave her old friends without sincere regret. Mr. Mason, you know more of this young girl's history than even I do, for you know her mother!"

Duke started.

The eyes of the two men met—the scene-painter's were startled, alarmed, the peer's were keen, sharp, intelligent.

"Don't distress yourself, Mr. Mason; I am not about to ask you any questions. I had rather, indeed, not hear the mother's name. It is a very painful story—let us hope the worst is over."

He spoke with a certain grave earnestness that made Duke think he at least suspected the truth. He averted his eyes uneasily. He longed to ask for Lady Charteris, but dared not, and his lordship continued:

"Is Miss Mason—may I beg her pardon," with a smile, "Miss Lisle in? I should like to see her. I presume you have no objection to my telling her at once?"

"Certainly not, my lord; she must know it at once, of course. She will be in presently. May I ask how soon?"

He stopped, ashamed of the choking in his throat.

"I shall leave that entirely to you and her," his lordship answered. "You are aware it cannot be postponed long, but I shall not hurry her away. She is to go to school. I propose sending her to the Convent of the Holy Cross, in Paris. I have a prejudice against fashionable boarding-schools as a

rule. Had I a daughter she should never enter one; and I believe those nuns of the Holy Cross to be the best teachers and most accomplished ladies under the sun. But, for a few weeks, if she choose—"

He did not finish the sentence. The house door opened, a quick, light step crossed the hall, a fresh young voice trilled a merry tune, the parlour door opened, and Polly herself stood revealed!

Lord Montalien looked at her earnestly. What did he see? A tall, slim figure, two flushed cheeks, two bright blue eyes, and a head running over with curls. She paused short, her song dying away in a sort of consternation at sight of so unlooked for a visitor.

Duke rose up and led her forward.

"My lord," he said, "this is your ward. Polly, Lord Montalien has come hither to see you and tell you some wonderful news. Try and not be angry with me for keeping it from you so long; and when you have heard all read this letter."

He put her father's note in her passive hand and went out of the room. Polly sank down in the chair he had vacated, with bright, large eyes of wonder. Lord Montalien took her hand in both his, and looked at her with a smile that went straight to her heart.

"You have your father's face, my child," he said. "I liked him the moment I saw him first, and I like you."

"My father!" the girl uttered. "You knew my father, my lord—Duke's cousin?"

"Not Duke's cousin—no tie of blood or name binds you to this good young man who has brought you up. Your father is alive! That letter you hold is from him, and you are Polly Mason no longer, but Paulina Lisle!"

She grew ashen pale and began to tremble. What was this she was about to hear? The hand Lord Montalien held grew cold in his grasp.

"There is no need to tremble, no need to fear, my child. My news is wonderful news—the best of news for you. Your father lives, and has sent you a fortune. You are the heiress of eighty thousand pounds, and I am appointed your guardian. Miss Paulina Lisle, let me be the first to congratulate you!"

She fell suddenly back in her chair. Lord Montalien started up in alarm, exclaiming:

"I have told her too abruptly—she is going to faint! I might have known it. Whom shall I call?"

He was going to the door, but she put out one hand and motioned him back.

"Wait," she said, in a voice that trembled. "I shall not faint." She sat up bravely as she spoke, and tried to smile, with lips that quivered. "Please go on, my lord; tell me all."

Then, still clasping the small, cold hand, still looking kindly at the pale young face, Lord Montalien told her "all." He narrated the circumstances under which fourteen years before he had met with Robert Hawkeley—the story Robert Hawkeley had told him—the promise that had passed between them and how that promise was to be redeemed—the fortune that was hers—his guardianship—her new name—the new life beginning so brightly.

She had heard all. He passed, still looking at her, wondering inwardly what manner of girl this child of sixteen was. She was quite still, quite pale, and the loud tick-tack of the kitchen clock became almost painfully audible, while the sunshine streamed unshadowed in among Rosanna's roses and geraniums. At last she spoke, to ask a question, looking at the nobleman beside her with big, solemn eyes:

"Who was my mother?"

"I do not know," he answered, gravely; "your father never told me her name!"

"Does Duke know?"

"I cannot tell; I think it probable. But, my dear Miss Lisle, there may be reasons why you should not know."

"What reasons?"

"Reasons impossible for me to explain," his lordship said, turning away in some embarrassment from the gaze of the innocent eyes. "You can ask Mr. Mason, however. If it is right you should know he will tell you."

"Right! A daughter should know her mother's name!" the girl replied, slowly. "My lord, you have told me about my father—my father who left England five months after his marriage, and did not return for two years. How then came I to be given to Duke Mason—how came he to know anything about me?"

"Your mother gave you to Duke Mason, of course."

Lord Montalien felt rather awkward as he answered—the large bright eyes still solemnly scanned his face. After all, telling this young person her own story was not so easy a matter as he had thought.

"My mother was a lady, you say," Polly's heart thrilled as she said it, "of high birth and station and wealth; and she gave me away to a poor mechanic, and never came to see or ask after me again. Lord Montalien, is my mother alive?"

The situation was growing worse and worse. Lord Montalien felt more uncomfortable than he ever remembered feeling in his life.

"I have reason to believe she is," he answered, slowly.

"Why did she not leave everything, and go to my father when he came for her?"

"Paulina, I don't know. Yes, I do; I'll tell you the truth, come what may. She did not return with him because he found her the wife of another man!"

The girl's very lips blanched at the words. "The wife of another man! She thought him dead then?"

"She did!"

"He did not seek her out and undeceive her?"

"No; he left England again. Don't blame your mother, my child; she thought him dead; she was coerced into the second marriage beyond doubt, and, if alive, still thinks your father dead. How she came to give you to Duke Mason Duke Mason will tell you himself. She had cogent reasons to be very sure, and she could not have given you to a better man. Rest contented with your wonderful good fortune, my dear, and don't ask too many questions. You are a great heiress now—try and think of that."

"A great heiress!" the girl repeated, and there was a world of bitterness in her tone; "a great heiress, yet poorer than the poorest, with a father and mother alive whom I have never seen—never may see; a mother who cast me off in my infancy, a father at the other end of the world! Lord Montalien, you may not tell me, Duke may not tell me, but I feel it here—if my mother is alive I shall find her out!"

She rose up, striking her hand lightly on her breast, her eyes shining with the fire of inspiration. "I shall find out my mother, and ask her why she deserted her child! For my father"—she looked suddenly at the note she held—"will you permit me, my lord?"

He bowed his head silently.

She opened the note and read. It dropped from her fingers, she covered her face with her hands, and the tears fell, thick and fast. Her moods were the moods of an April day, sunshine and showers, bright and short-lived.

She looked up at last and dashed them away, smiling radiantly. The colour came back to her cheeks, the glad sparkle to her eyes, the joyous ring to her voice. She was rich, rich beyond her wildest dreams. She was a young lady of birth and fortune. Lord Montalien was her guardian. All the visions of her life were realized—more than realized. Was she dreaming or awake?

"It is like a fairy tale," she said, "like a story from the Arabian Nights. Oh, my lord, is all this true you have been telling me? Am I asleep or in a dream?"

Lord Montalien got up to go with a smile, holding out his hand in farewell.

"Good-bye for the present, Miss Lisle. I shall call again to-morrow. By that time you will probably have convinced yourself that it is a very pleasant reality. You, and your good friends here, shall fix the time of your departure. I shall not hurry you, but I shall certainly expect you during your stay in Speckhaven to be a constant visitor at the Priory."

Polly thought of Allan Fane and Miss Hanton, and flushed all over her fair face.

"Or why not make your home altogether at the Priory during the few weeks you remain?" urged Lord Montalien. "It is your home now and for the future, you know, and I need not tell you how charmed we all will be."

"And leave Duke and Rosanna!" Polly said, looking at him in wonder. "Oh, no, my lord. Thank you very much, all the same."

"At least you will come to see us every day?"

Polly shook her head.

"You will dine with us, then, once before you go. Don't be obstinate, Miss Lisle, and force us into the rôle of tyrannical guardians so soon."

"Well—if you insist—but—"

Her reluctance was very visible. It was not shyness—that he saw. If the girl had been born in a palace her manner could not have been more simple, more natural, more unaffectedly easy. What was it? Lord Montalien wondered.

"You know some of my people I think," he said, "Francis and Guy tell me they are acquainted with you, and Allan Fane is quite an intimate friend."

He was watching her closely, and the rosy light shone again in the sensitive face. That was it! The poor understood at once that Mr. Fane had been quite an "intimate friend."

"When I come to-morrow," he said, moving to the door, "I shall bring Gripper—Gripper's your lawyer, my dear—and he has come down here to draw up the necessary documents appointing me your guardian, and to explain to you the circumstances under which you come into your fortune. They

are somewhat unusual, but, considering your father's story, very natural. Now, my dear, good-day to you. Don't lose your appetite and sleep, thinking of this fairy fortune. But where is the use of advising you? Of course you will."

Polly laughed. She was disposed to like this pleasant new guardian already; and, indeed, it was no hard task for most women to like Lord Montalien. She watched him out of sight; then she went slowly into the house. She opened her letter and read it again. Her father lived, and from over the wide sea spoke to her those sweet, solemn words of fatherly love—the first she had ever heard. Again the great tears welled up into the blue eyes. She stretched forth her arms with an involuntary cry.

"Oh, father! father! Come home!"

Only once in the letter he spoke of her mother. "Your mother lives, my child," he wrote; "a lady of rank and title, the wife of another man. But in your heart there must lie no hard thoughts of her. Weak she may have been—guilty never. She believed, believes still, that Robert Lisle is dead—as I am to her. One day I may return to England and my precious daughter."

She kissed the letter, put it in her bosom, and went in search of her friends.

Rosanna was bustling about the kitchen, looking unutterably grim and stern to hide all she felt.

"Duke's upstairs," she said, curtly, to the girl, and turned her back upon her.

Strong-minded the spinster undoubtedly was, but she was not strong enough to bear the sight of Polly just then.

Duke was painting and smoking furiously—with him always a sign of great mental disturbance. He looked round from his work and smiled rather a ghastly smile of greeting.

"Well, Duchess!"

"Well, Duke!"

She came over and stood beside him, resting one hand caressingly on his shoulder. There was no need to tell her what Rosanna's grimness and Duke's silence meant; she understood them perfectly, and loved them better in this hour than ever before in her life.

"Who knows? I may have been a prophet!" the scene-painter said, still trying to speak gaily. "You may be a Duchess yet, Miss Lisle. I suppose it is the correct thing to call Lord Montalien's ward and the heiress of eighty thousand Miss Lisle."

"Duke!"

He dropped his brush and held out his hand.

"I wish you joy, Duchess—in all sincerity. I hope you'll be as happy in your new life as—as I have tried to make you in this. You're going away, my dear—going away, to come back no more; but I know you will never quite forget Duke and Rosanna."

His voice broke. He dropped her hand and walked away to the window to hide the tears of which his manhood was ashamed.

Two white arms were about his neck in an instant, two warm lips impetuously kissing his averted face.

"Duke! Duke! dear old Duke! the best, the kindest friend there ever was in this world! Forget you and Rosanna! Why, what a horrible little monster you must think me! I don't know what you mean by talking about my going away never to come back! If I were Queen Victoria's ward, and heiress of fifty hundred million pounds!" cried this impetuous young woman, "I should come back just the same. This is my home—at least until my father returns from California to claim me. His right is first, and most sacred. Oh, Duke! to think Polly Mason should ever have had a father!"

Duke smiled in spite of himself.

"It is extraordinary. I should have liked to have told you ages ago, but you see I was bound by promises to both, and dare not."

"Promises to both. That includes my mother, I suppose?"

"Your mother. Yes, Duchess."

"Tell me all about her, Duke. My mother! how strange it sounds! What was she like? Was she handsome? Am I like her? That sounds conceited, I am afraid, but I don't mean it so."

"She was—she is beautiful, and you are not in the least like her. You have your father's face and eyes, and a very good face and eyes they are. Her eyes were black, and she was smaller than you."

He spoke dreamily, thinking of the great, despairing black eyes that had looked at him so lately full of woman's uttermost woe.

"Duke, I don't think I like my mother! She must have been weak and cold-hearted. Why did she give me up? Why did she marry that other man? I hate to think of it even. Why was she not faithful through all things—to death—to the husband and child she loved?"

The girl's eyes flashed—the rosy light so quick to come and go, under that transparent skin, lit up her gipsy face once more.

"Don't you blame her, Duchess," Duke answered,

gravely; "since she did it for your sake. She would have preferred death to marrying Sir—, I mean marrying again of her own free will. She sacrificed herself for you. You were taken from her at your birth—she knew you lived, but nothing more, and she yearned to possess you. She feared for you more than she feared for herself—for your future happiness, life even; and when you were made the price of her sacrifice she consented. She had borne imprisonment, even cruelty, rather than yield. She was never more faithful to the husband she thought dead than in the hour when he saw her at the altar the bride of another man, for she sacrificed her own life to save his child. She gave you to me—with me she knew you would be safe, at least, and she dared not keep you herself. Your mother is the best, the noblest, the most injured woman on earth—a martyr, Duchess, as surely as ever suffering made a martyr! Don't you blame her—I cannot bear to hear you."

"You loved my mother like this, Duke?"

"I revered her, Miss Lisle. I pity her as I never pitied any one in my life. She is very, very unhappy."

"Is—her husband unkind to her?"

"I am afraid so, my dear. And she knows you live, and she loves and must live apart from you, and deny you a mother's care. Is that not enough of itself?"

"Duke," Polly said, entreatingly, "tell me her name. Do! Let me go to her—only once, ever so secretly, and kiss her, and tell her I love her, and am sorry for her too. Do! Oh, Duke, if you ever cared for your little Duchess, whom you are going to lose, tell me her name!"

She clasped her arms once more around his neck, she coaxed him with tears and kisses. The strong man trembled under that clasp.

"I can't, Duchess—don't ask me. Heaven knows I would refuse you nothing if I could, but it must not be. You don't know what you ask—be content. Love her as much as you like—she is worthy of it all, and hope for the best, but the day when you may know your mother and go to her has not yet come. Look here—I have kept this for you for fourteen years. Your mother gave it me on the night I saw her first."

He drew forth the opal ring and slid it on one of Polly's slim, ringless fingers.

"It is yours, my girl—wear it for your mother's sake."

"And it is all I may ever know of her," Polly sighed. "It is very sad and very strange. I used to think it would be beautiful to have a history—to be a heroine of romance; now I am one, and somehow it saddens me more than anything did before. To think that I should have a mother who dare not acknowledge me—that some day I may meet her, and look at her, and not know her. To think that I should have a father an exile, a lonely, solitary wanderer in those wild, far-off lands, who has lost wife and child through no fault of his, and he may never return. But I will go to him, if he do not come to me. Yes, Duke, when my two years' school-life are ended, if he do not return to me I will go to him. It will be like Elizabeth and the Exile of Siberia over again. And now I shall go straight this very moment and answer his dear, darling letter."

Which she did, dashing off page after page in an impetuous, running hand. There was no end of love, and no end of blots, and scores of notes of exclamation, and doubtful spelling and grammar; but when one's heart is full to overflowing, and one is a young person of sixteen, what does a little broken orthography or syntax signify?

Polly's heart was in the right place if her words were not, and probably Mr. Robert Lisle, out in San Francisco, smiled a good deal over this epistle, even with the tears in his eyes.

The news spread like wildfire. Before the summer stars came out that night every man, woman, and child in Speckhaven knew that Polly Mason was an heiress, and not Polly Mason at all.

The heiress herself had rushed headlong to see her friend Alice, and tell her the wonderful news, and had exhibited her ring and her father's picture, which Miss Warren had seen scores of times before, and promise her unlimited jewellery when she came into her fortune.

"When I leave school you shall come and live with me, Alice, if you are not married," Polly cried; "and when I'm gone you must write me long, long letters, and I shall ask Lord Montalien for enough of my fortune to buy a looker for my picture and some of my hair to leave you. Oh, Alice, I don't believe I shall ever sleep a wink again for thinking of it as long as I live!"

Her dreams were rather broken that night, and it seemed to her that the new day would never dawn. She half feared the whole would melt away in the darkness, and she would awake to find herself little Polly Mason again instead of Miss Paulina Lisle.

Paulina Lisle!



[A MIDNIGHT VISIT.]

She repeated the pretty name over and over again with intense, childish ecstasy. She had hated her name of Polly so, she had so longed for some beautiful, stately appellation, and, lo, here she had it! We believe her new name gave her tenfold more pleasure than the thought of her noble inheritance.

Lord Montalien came over next day with Mr. Gripper, which legal gentleman produced documents and with red tape, and read them solemnly aloud to his bewildered little client. It was all Greek to Polly, except one or two conditions which her mind grasped in passing. She was Lord Montalien's ward until she should come of age or marry. If Lord Montalien died before either of those events the power of appointing a new guardian was vested in him.

In the hour of her marriage—whether she married with or without the consent of her guardian or during her minority—her fortune became absolutely her own thenceforth.

This was the proviso which his lordship had mentioned on the previous day as unusual. It was easy enough by the light of Robert Lisle's own history to understand it—it was to save her from her mother's fate. How little he dreamed in providing that saving clause for the happiness of the daughter he loved how much trouble and shame and remorse it was to cause her in the days to come!

The people from the Priory called upon Lord Montalien's ward with congratulations and cordial expressions of good will.

Among others came Mr. Francis, whom Polly did not like, Mr. Guy, whom she admired and liked very much, and Sir Vane Charteris, who repelled her with his coarse mouth and fulsome compliments.

The girl wondered why he looked at her with such intensity, his small black eyes seeming to devour her.

His little daughter came with him, beautifully dressed, and much more gracious than on that other memorable occasion.

Sir Vane expressed his regret that Lady Charteris could not have the happiness of making Miss Lisle's charming acquaintance. Lady Charteris was ill, confined to her room—a nervous, hysterical attack, but would probably be able to travel on the morrow, when he proposed returning to town to consult an eminent physician respecting the state of her health.

Miss Lisle listened very coldly, she disliked both him and his daughter, and was relieved when they went away. Miss Hutton also called with her kinsman, Lord Montalien, elegant of costume, indisputably high bred and patrician, but looking more elderly and faded than ever by contrast with that fresh, bright face. Mr. Allan Fane did not call—

he was eating his very heart out with rage and baffled love. Retribution had come very swiftly to the tailor's ambitious son.

Lord Montalien's ward, obeying the behests of her guardian, spent one evening at the Priory. Only one—Duke and Rosanna must have all the rest. She went dressed in white tulle—white was the proper thing for a heroine—with a blue ribbon in her amber curls, and a blue belt around her slim waist.

She looked lovely! The white arms and neck glimmered through the flimsy tulle, and there was a flush on her cheeks and a light in her eyes. She entered those stately rooms a guest, an equal, she who had been Polly Mason last week; and she sat at Lord Montalien's right hand at dinner, and was the little queen of the feast.

The dishes at that dinner were of "such stuff as dreams are made of." She had things put on her plate, and she ate them, and wondered inwardly all the while what on earth they could be. She drank some sparkling Moselle, and she had a slice of pineapple, and did not make one single mistake. She was not awkward, she was in no way embarrassed, neither was she in the least forward. Altogether she was charming, and Lord Montalien was secretly fascinated by his little ward.

"How true and clear she rings," he thought; "if she had been bred a countess her manners could not be more simple and perfect. What a charming little rosebud she is, and how gloriously destined to bloom in the future."

Allan Fane sat opposite "Miss Lisle" at dinner, with the faded eyes of his high-born betrothed fixed icily upon him.

This beautiful little heiress might have been his in this hour, and he had given her up, and bound himself to a woman he did not and never could love.

"It might have been." He had wrought his misery with his own hand. If Polly thirsted for vengeance on this recreant lover of hers she had it. But she did not, she had met him with a smile of perfect provoking good humour and forgiveness. He was so utterly indifferent to her now that she had no room in her heart for him even to wish him unhappy.

He might marry Miss Hutton to-morrow, and she would go to his wedding with pleasure. He knew it too, no woman's eyes had ever looked so frankly into the eyes of a man for whom she cared one straw.

In the drawing-room after dinner, with some little urging, Polly sang. She did not mind singing at all, but she only played accompaniments of her own, she did not understand the piano she said.

"What does that matter, Miss Lisle?" said Guy

Earls court; "who cares for the accompaniment? I know you can sing—I've heard you."

Polly laughed, and blushed at the remembrance.

"That song has haunted me ever since, I assure you. Sing it again, Miss Lisle, and exorcise it."

He led her to the piano, and she obeyed.

Her sweet, clear voice filled the rooms. With proper training that voice alone might have made her fortune. She sang again "County Guy."

"Ah, County Guy! the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the sea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark whose lay has trilled all day
Sits hushed, his partner nigh—
Breeze, bird and flower confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?"

He was beside her, bending over her, his dark, dreamy, Italian eyes fixed on her face. What did Guy Earls court think of her? In days to come did that sweet, youthful face haunt his dreams? In the girl's memory that night lived for ever, the first of her new existence, and there were hours when Guy Earls court's dark face rose up before her like the face of a reproachful ghost. She never forgot it, nor him, as he stood there beside her, the dark beauty of his Southern face, and his jet-black hair, such a marked contrast to her own. How handsome he had looked! How happy she had been! She had reason to remember it bitterly in the years to come.

Allan Fane, hovering afar off, took his punishment in sullen silence. He had lost her himself, but that was no reason why he should not be savagely jealous of every other man or woman on whom she smiled. Guy had been his warmest friend—he felt as loyally towards him as it was in his shifting, selfish nature to be loyal to any one, but he could have murdered him that night.

This girl, his father's ward, with her noble fortune, her peerless beauty, would be one day Guy Earls court's wife, and he—he looked with sullen, angry eyes at Diana Hutton, with her three-and-thirty years and her faded face, and walked out of the room and out of the house.

The soft summer rain was falling, he heeded it not. He lit his cigar, and walked up and down under the fragrant trees, up and down, up and down. It grew late—Miss Lisle was driven home—she insisted upon it—he heard the last sound of the wheels that bore her away, then he flung himself on the wet grass, face downwards, and knew he had lost for ever the happiness of his life.

(To be continued.)



[THE WOLF UNMASKED.]

THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE.

CHAPTER XXV.

As you from crimes would be pardoned be
Let your indulgence set me free. *Tempest.*

THE night wore slowly on. Myriads of stars glittered like jewels in the clear winter sky, and a crescent moon hung like a golden diadem above the snow-crowned summits of the Alpine peaks. Far and near the convent bells were chiming, calling their cloistered devotees to their evening devotions.

Lady Grace, reclining on her couch, listened to their music in a half-dream. The supper that her hostess had brought remained almost untasted on the table beside her, for the girl had but little appetite. She drew from her bosom the little case that contained the pictured face of her dead lover, and gazed upon it with fond and tender eyes. Her tears fell upon it like summer rain.

"Oh, Carlos! dear Carlos!" she sobbed, "if you had only lived!"

She dried her tears and walked to the barred window. Why was it so strongly grated? she wondered as she looked out upon the grand prospect that lay beyond—the Alpine peaks towering up in the misty moonlight, and far in the blue distance the waters of the Rhone glittering indistinct and dreamlike.

All her life seemed like a dream as she stood there, so far away from home and friends; and for the first time she began to wonder if she had acted wisely in trusting Father Anselm so implicitly. It was growing late and he had not returned, neither had Sister Dorothea. Did they intend to leave her all alone in that grim old castle? She glanced around her with a shudder of terror at the ponderous door, so securely locked, and for the first time it flashed upon her that she was a prisoner. Her cheeks whitened with a vague terror, and her womanly instincts, once aroused, showed her how unwisely she had acted in undertaking such a long and perilous journey.

Her ear caught the sound of a step upon the stairs, the key turned in the lock, and the friar entered. Lady Grace faced him with flashing eyes.

"Now be good enough to tell me, Father Anselm," she began, with more hauteur than she had ever before manifested in addressing her spiritual adviser, "why I am a prisoner."

Father Anselm laughed in a good-natured way, and coolly seated himself in an easy-chair opposite.

"In a strange place, my child," he replied, "it

occurred to me that you really would be safer locked in."

"That may be," she continued, "but you must know that such a proceeding is rather strange, Father Anselm. And, when I come to think of it, why could we not go on to St. Gothard? I don't like this dreary old castle, and I'm sincerely sorry that I did not remain at the Sacred Heart. Will Sister Dorothea return to-night?"

The monk shook his head, gazing at her from beneath his mystic cowl with an expression in his glittering gray eyes that curdled the very blood in her veins. It was only by a great effort that she suppressed a shriek of terror. But the proud, brave blood in her veins supported her. She arose with the air of a queen.

"In that case, Father Anselm," she said, haughtily, "I must request you to leave me."

The monk arose also, and made a step towards her.

"Yes," he said, "I will leave you, but on the morrow I shall return, for I have a story to tell you—a story that will explain all this mystery. I have also an offer to make you—an offer that will give you, instead of the cold, dead, grave-like existence of a nun, a life of love and bliss."

Before the astonished girl could utter a word he seized her hand, and pressed it passionately to his lips, then, retreating from the room, closed and locked the massive door.

White and breathless with terror, she stood where he left her, like an image carved in stone, her very reason for the moment stunned and powerless.

But by degrees she began to realize the horror of her position. Hundreds of miles away from home and friends, shut up like a prisoner in this grim old Alpine castle; and for what purpose? Who and what was this man, who, under the garb of a holy calling, had won her confidence, and lured her into this peril? She ran round the spacious apartment, searching for some chance of escape. But there was none; the black walls shut her in like a tomb.

With a wail of impotent self-reproach for the folly that had brought her into this danger, she threw herself on the couch, and, by the time the moon had dropped behind the snow-clad peaks, exhausted nature had given way, and, despite her misery, she was sound asleep.

The ringing of the convent bells awoke her on the following morning, and she started up with a sharp consciousness of some imminent peril. After completing her toilet she sat down by the window and looked out. The morning was glorious, the prospect wild and grand beyond all description.

While she thus sat absorbed in thought the key

turned in the lock, and her hostess entered, bringing her breakfast—a very tempting repast and stylishly served on a silver tray.

Lady Grace received it with high-bred courtesy, then, facing the woman like a queen, she said, quietly:

"Give me the key, please. I always prefer to have the key of my own apartment."

A smile flickered over the woman's stolid face, giving a curious, triumphant expression to her green-gray eyes.

"Pardon, miss, and I'd like to oblige you," she replied, holding the key securely between her huge thumb and finger, "but I've had my orders, and I'm bound to obey them."

Whereupon she left the apartment with a mocking courtesy, locking the door behind her. Grace realized that she was indeed a prisoner; but by whose hand or for what purpose?

Could Lady Heathcote have had aught to do with it, she wondered, in order to secure for herself the Heathcote heritage? But no sooner had she harboured the thought than she reproached herself for being unjust and unnatural.

Finding the problem altogether too deep for her solution, she determined to possess her soul in patience till the mystery should be made clear; and accordingly in a very quiet and master-of-fact way she sat down to her breakfast, which she had barely finished when Father Anselm was announced.

He wore his official robes that morning, and with them an air of lofty self-importance. Lady Grace received him with chilling hauteur.

"Now, Father Anselm, let me have your story and the solution of this mystery. I demand to know by what right and for what purpose I am imprisoned in this place."

He watched her flushing face and blazing eyes with evident admiration, but his voice was kindly and respectful as he began:

"I have come for that purpose, my daughter, to make everything clear and plain to you. But I must begin at the beginning, and as my story is somewhat lengthy I must entreat you to be patient."

"Not a great many years ago," he continued, "an English nobleman of great wealth and reputation died, leaving no heir to his title and vast estates but one slender, blue-eyed little daughter. He left her to the care of a guardian and a step-mother; but the guardian was an imbecile, and the step-mother was a beautiful fiend, and between the two this poor little girl, the last representative of one of England's noblest lines, had but little protection. Moreover, by the stipulations of her father's last will, she was be-

trothed in marriage to a young lord of the most disgusting and dissolute habits. This young lord pressed his suit, and the wicked stepmother laid her plans by which to rid herself of her husband's child, and get the vast wealth into her own hands. Between the two the gentle girl was well-nigh distracted, and no one interfered.

"But she had a friend who watched her day and night, who would have died a thousand times to spare her one pang of sorrow. He did not speak of his devotion, he only sought for opportunities to serve her; but he loved her, in her girlish grace and loveliness, with the deathless love of a strong man's heart.

"After a time they sent her down to an old convent in Italy because the stepmother wanted her out of the way; and this stepmother was only watching for a favourable chance to put her entirely out of the way—in plain words, to murder her!"

Lady Grace put up her hands with an imploring gesture, while she grew white to the very lips.

"This true, my child," the monk went on, his eye bent upon her, full of a strange, glittering awe; "she fully intended to murder her that she might possess all this vast wealth. But the girl's friend learned of her wicked plans, and determined to save her at the risk of his own life. He disguised himself as a monk and followed her to Italy. He became her daily companion, her spiritual adviser and director. She confided to him all her girlish sorrows and fancies, and after a while she made up her mind to become a nun. He encouraged her in this, not because he intended that she really should do so foolish a thing, but to save her from danger."

He paused on instant; but the young girl before him sat like a statue, not deigning to move or speak, and he went on:

"He knew too well that to go back to her father's house without a protector was to return to certain death, and he encouraged her to remain. Then, when she was on the point of consummating her intention to take the veil, he caused her into the notion of making a pilgrimage to St. Gothard."

"And now, because he desires to save her from the murderous designs of her stepmother, and because he adores her as no living man ever adored woman before, he holds her a prisoner to-day, waiting only for her consent to make her his wife, and restore her in honour and triumph to her father's heritage."

For an instant after he ceased speaking there was an unbroken silence; then Lady Grace arose to her feet, with an ominous glitter in her blue eyes.

"Who are you, sir?" she demanded, haughtily.

The man made a step back, then, as if by magic, the sergo habiliments, that he had worn so long, slipped down by his feet, the mystic cowl dropped from his face, and as the frightened girl advanced her staring eyes recognized Colonel Ludovic Hornshawe!

Despite all her self-command, Lady Grace uttered a sharp cry of terror, and sinking into her chair she buried her face in her hands. But she did not faint, for the Heathcote blood was proud and strong and enduring. In almost an instant she looked up again, a mocking smile curving her scarlet lip.

"Well, Colonel Hornshawe," she said, slowly, and with silvery intonation, "I must really congratulate you on your dramatic talent—I never imagined it was half so brilliant. Why, colonel, you really have missed your vocation, you should have gone on the stage."

The colonel winced a little beneath this cutting irony, and bit at his gray moustache. But a moment later he smiled pleasantly, and, crossing the room, seated himself by the girl's side.

"We won't quarrel, my dear," he said; "we cannot afford to do that; our interests are identical, and, moreover, I love you as you will never be loved again."

"Say rather you love the Heathcote heritage, Colonel Hornshawe," retorted Grace, bitterly; "let us be truthful, and call things by their right names. And now," she continued, with queenly dignity, "we will come to the point at once. Of course you want money, and I desire to be safely conveyed to England at the earliest moment possible. Name the price of my ransom, colonel, and you shall have it, even to the half of my dead father's possessions."

The Indian officer flushed, and a sudden spark leaped to his steel-gray eyes.

"Child," he answered, gravely, "I am not the man to be bribed, as you will discover; and, if I were," he added, with a tinge of irony, "you are scarcely in the position to meet my demands. The Heathcote estates are very snugly in the hands of your father's second wife, and, unless I'm much mistaken, she'll endure a hard struggle before she'll give them up. Your sole and only hope of being reinstated in your lawful position is in becoming my wife, and for that purpose, as I have stated, I have brought you hither."

"Then, Colonel Hornshawe," she replied, without

a tremor, or an instant's hesitation, "I shall never be reinstated, never see my father's house again, for I will die a beggar in the streets sooner than become your wife."

The colonel flushed again, and bit his moustache fiercely, but he managed to speak calmly.

"We'll not jump to any hasty decisions," he said; "we haven't talked the matter over yet. You are mistaken in thinking that I am influenced by a greedy desire for the Heathcote wealth. I love you, Grace, I have loved you for years, truly and unselfishly; I want you for my wife, and as my wife I will shield you from all danger, and see that your rightful possessions are restored to you. Why cannot you trust me, little one?" he continued, tenderly, "you used to look upon me as your friend, and now, that is my ring, my parting gift, upon your finger. Grace, you will learn to be kind to me at least."

She drew the hoop of Indian gold with its great blood-red ruby from her finger, and threw it at his feet.

"I wore it because I thought you were my friend," she said, "but you have deceived and betrayed me, Colonel Hornshawe, and I never can trust or respect you again."

The officer picked up the ring with a quiet smile. "You are excited now, and vexed with me for having deceived you, but that feeling will pass away, and you will think better of my offer. I will make you happy, little Grace, if you will trust me; my whole life shall be devoted to that one purpose. But you need not answer now; I will leave you to think the matter over. I know it looks like playing the tyrant to keep you locked up in this old castle, but it's all for your own safety and interest. And the moment you consent to become my wife you shall be free. We can be married at St. Gothard, and I will take you home to England in triumph; and, my beautiful darling, I will make you the happiest wife in the United Kingdom."

"But if I refuse to become your wife, Colonel Hornshawe?" she interrogated as he rose to depart.

"In that case, my dear," he replied, with a swift gleam of his steady eyes, and an ugly expression about his mouth, "it will be my painful duty to hold you a prisoner. I am an old soldier, you know, and used to that sort of thing. And, not wishing to weary you with my presence, I will bid you good morning!"

Bowing suavely, he left the room, carefully locking the door after him.

"He means what he says," moaned Grace, letting her head drop forward on the table. "He'll never relent; but I'll outwit him," she burst out, passionately, with blazing eyes; "I'll get out of this miserable trap, if I have to scale these castle walls."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Heavens are just, and Time suppresseth wrongs.

Henry VI.

A COUPLE of days went by before Lady Grace saw the Indian officer again; dreadfully tedious days they were, though her sphinx-faced hostess brought her a guitar, and a new novel and a bit of very dainty needlework, with which to amuse herself. She had her meals too, at stated periods, served as grandly as if she were a queen; but she was in no mood for amusement, nor yet for the indulgence of the appetite, so the colonel's very tender consideration went for nothing.

Her impatience had well-nigh grown into a fever when in the purple glamour of an Alpine twilight the colonel made his appearance. He was fastidiously dressed, and looking his best, and even on ordinary occasions Colonel Hornshawe was a handsome man, of the very type that most women admire.

Yet a shiver of intense disgust swept over Grace as he entered the apartment.

But the colonel either could not or would not perceive these signs of aversion, and approached her with gallant words and an outstretched hand.

"My dear little girl," he began, tenderly, still extending one hand, which Lady Grace did not deign to notice, while with the other he transferred the ponderous key of her prison to his pocket. "My dear little girl, you cannot dream how it pains me to see your sweet face growing so wan."

A smile of chilling contempt curled her fine lip.

"Be kind enough to spare me all sentiment, Colonel Hornshawe," she said, icily, "for I assure you I do not appreciate it; the only subject that can possibly interest me now is my release from this place."

"Undoubtedly, my dear," replied the colonel, pleasantly, "and I very much regret to have kept you waiting so long, but there were business matters to settle, and I was forced to run down to Milan, but now I am wholly at your service. I have completed the final arrangements; we can be married at St. Gothard to-morrow morning, and start direct for England; and, arrived there with a husband's right, it will be easy for me to have your own restored to you; and I really believe, if your dear father were alive

and cognizant of the circumstances that surround you, the great peril that threatens you, he would bless and sanction the step we are about to take.

"In connection with this," he went on, seeing that she made no answer, "I've a bit of startling news to tell you. It is in all the London papers, and I had it from a reliable source besides. It appears that Lord Remington and Lady Beatrice fell very much in love, and made a run-away trip. They travelled night and day till they reached Gretna Green, where they were married, then his lordship took his bride to an old place of his, Mortlake Towers, in Cumberland. But Lady Heathcote had intelligence of it, and she followed on their very heels, reaching Mortlake only an hour or two after they did. She hastened to the bride's apartments, and there a terrible scene ensued. Lady Heathcote was frantic, told her daughter that she was a bride, but could never be a wife, then whispered some terrible secret in her ear, whereupon Lady Beatrice snatched up a dagger and plunged it into her heart; and her newly wedded husband entered the room to find her dead."

"Dead!" gasped Grace, growing white to the lips.

"Dead," replied the merciless colonel, "and buried down at Brignoll. The secret that caused her death none can divine. Lady Heathcote and Lord Remington have quarrelled, and his lordship has sailed for Egypt. So, you perceive, my sweet child, that you would be unsafe, to say the least, in such a vulture's nest as that. No, no, little one, you never can go back without a true husband to protect you."

But Grace took no heed; she only clasped her hands and murmured:

"Poor Beatrice, poor Beatrice! so young and beautiful, and Lord Remington loved her so—poor Beatrice!"

Then she fell into a reverie, through which the colonel watched her as a cat watches a mouse. Presently she looked up, with a sudden brightening in her eyes.

"Lord Remington cannot force me to marry him now," she said, artlessly, "and I may return home in peace."

"Yes, my child, you can return to England in peace, for you will be my wife, and there is no danger or trouble from which I will not shield you. Come, now, let us banish all these disagreeable things, and talk over our own happy prospects."

His quiet persistence and determination stung her into anger.

"For pity's sake, Colonel Hornshawe," she said, sharply, "don't act so foolishly. If you were not an old man, quite old enough to be my father, you would force me to laugh at you. Do you really suppose I shall ever be your wife?"

"I suppose nothing about it," he replied, coolly. "I know you will."

"Your wife," she cried, mockingly. "Oh, Colonel Hornshawe, I gave you credit for having more wisdom! But once for all let us settle that question. I tell you decidedly that there are no possible circumstances that could force me even to think of such a step. I am in your power, Colonel Hornshawe, because you were mean and unmanly enough to betray and entrap me, while you pretended to be my best friend. But I do not fear you; I defy you, and feel sure that I shall outwit you. But if death stared me in the face I would accept it ten thousand times sooner than I would become your wife."

As her ringing voice ceased an appalling change crept over the officer's face; the colour died out, leaving his complexion of a livid pallor, and his eyes deepened into a glittering green.

"Be it so then," he replied, between his set teeth, over which the gray moustaches worked and coiled like an angry serpent. "You have made your decision—now hear mine. Lady Grace Heathcote, you are dead. If you were lying in your grave rigid and stark you could not be more effectually dead and buried than you are at this moment."

He watched her, marking the effect of these terrible words; but the proud girl faced him with eyes that did not quail, serene and fearless as a queen; and he went on:

"To-morrow morning you will be removed from this room to a lower dungeon, where the light of heaven never enters, and, once there, you will have looked your last upon the outside world. 'Twill be a slow, torturing death for one so young and strong, my lady," he said, smiling sardonically. "A sharp contrast to being the beautiful and idolized lady of Heathcote Abbey. For myself, I shall return at once to England and report to St. Denys Delmar and Lady Heathcote. I shall tell them of the sudden death of Lady Grace, the young heiress, and her body will be sent from the Sacred Heart, and there will be a grand funeral at the old Abbey, and, with unparalleled pomp and display, the last of her noble race, Lady Grace Heathcote, will be borne to her long home. You understand, my girl, Lady Grace Heathcote will sleep under the

Heathcote mausoleum, and you—you will rot in an Alpine dungeon."

His tigerish face glared upon her like that of a fiend, still she did not falter, or even show a tremor. "Lady Heathcote and I," continued the gallant officer, "are friends of long standing. Her ladyship is a fascinating woman, and I flatter myself, despite your indifference, that I still possess some few attractions; I feel convinced that her ladyship will think so. We shall marry, your stepmother and myself, will own and enjoy the Heathcote heritage together. This is the programme, my dear, and we shall not fail to carry it out."

"Yes, you will, Colonel Henshaw."

Her voice startled him like a bugle call.

"Who will prevent us, my dear?" he questioned, scornfully.

She raised her slender hand, on which still gleamed the betrothal ring of her dead love, and, facing him like a young pythoness, she answered, solemnly:

"Heaven!"

And, scoffing infidel that he was, the colonel looked her prison door with a nameless terror at his wicked heart.

CHAPTER XXVII.

To this era let those repair

That are either true or false.

Poisoned Pilgrims.

LADY HEATHCOTE was getting ready to go down to the Sacred Heart in company with St. Denys Delmar, to look after her step-daughter, and to see if she really had carried out her resolve to become a nun; and good St. Denys in a tremor of fatherly solicitude for his ward, was urging her to set out at once; and the more my lady endeavoured to be in haste the more she was deterred.

She had found the Abbey in a perfect state of chaos, one half the servants gone and the other half frightened into insanity by the depredations of that meddlesome and merciless ghost, and poor Mrs. Chudleigh, the housekeeper, in a pitiable state of terror and excitement.

Lady Heathcote went to work in earnest, oblivious of ghosts, or anything else, for she had just received a letter from Colonel Henshaw, announcing his speedy return to England, and she was determined to leave the Abbey looking its best to welcome him.

And she succeeded, for it was a motto with her ladyship that only the idle and unwise failed. She made the desert bloom and blossom as the rose, refilled the servants' quarters, exorcised the ghost, and was all ready for her triumph when a new-comer appeared upon the scene, and that on the afternoon before the morning which was to see her start for Italy.

A great, burly fellow in a seaman's garb, and with the curious Cornish burr upon his tongue—who had pushed the valets and footmen aside—had made his way into the glittering drawing-room at Heathcote with as much nonchalance as if he were a born king.

His name was Hendrick Seaton, from Land's End, Cornwall, and he introduced himself as being the brother of one Margaret Seaton, formerly employed in the Heathcote service.

Her ladyship heard him with a stare of well-bred surprise. And what, pray, could he desire of her?

Of her, indeed? Why, to know what had become of his sister, to be sure—what else did she suppose?

Lady Heathcote winced a trifle before the fellow's stolid gaze, and put her jewelled fingers to her ears to shut out the coarse, Cornish voice; then she broke into a fit of indignation.

"How dare you intrude yourself upon my presence on such an errand as this, you great, unmanly boor," she cried, "when you know as well as I that Margaret Seaton stole away from Heathcote Abbey, taking away with her great many valuables, among which was the famous opal keeper ring that contained the secret of the hidden Heathcote wealth? Haven't I had her advertised and offered rewards for her arrest and for the recovery of the opal? And here you come to me to know where she is!"

But my lady had wasted her breath, for the fellow stood as immovable as stone.

"Yes, mum; I've 'eard all that over an' over," he replied, never winking his wide, yellow eyes; "but I've 'eard suthin' else too, an' I knows as well as you does yerself that all that splutter was boah, to blind folks' eyes to the real truth. Ye made away wi' Margaret Seaton yerself, mum, 'cause she knowed a secret o' yorn, and ye can't deny it."

Lady Heathcote could scarcely repress a shriek of terror; she felt as if the fellow's staring eyes, which never for an instant left her face, and the sound of his voice, and the words he was saying, would surely drive her insane; but by a great effort she managed to control her voice.

"Why, my good man, how very foolish," she said, gently, "you are utterly mistaken in all this—Margaret Seaton was a stranger to me. I met her

after my marriage to Lord Heathcote; and instead of making away with her it is to my best interest that she should return. Bring her to me when you will, and I will make you a rich man."

The man broke into a low chuckle and wagged his head from side to side.

"You've got a glib tongue, mum," he said, "and I'm sorry I can't believe ye, but ye seem to know better, and what a man knows he knows in spite o' everything. And I hain't made up my mind yet that poor Margaret's dead. I've been benting about ever since she disappeared; and I think I'm getting on the right scent now. Margaret was a good sister to me, and I was fond of her next to my own wife, and I'm never goin' to gi't it up till I ferret the whole thing out. That's what's brought me to Heathcote Abbey, and I'm goin' to stay."

"If you trouble me any more with your nonsense I'll have you imprisoned," said her ladyship, angrily.

"No, ye won't, mum."

"Won't I?" she almost shrieked as she rang the bell.

"No, ye won't," continued the fellow, stontly, with a cunning smile; "tussle yer afraid. I might tell on ye, mum."

When Simpkins entered, in answer to the bell, he found Lady Heathcote as white as death.

"Why, my lady," he began, in consternation, glancing from her ashen face to the great, shaggy fellow who stood before her. "What is it? Has this—"

"No, no!" she interposed, faintly; "but I'm harassed and wearied out of my life. Show the man out, Simpkins, and tell the lodge-keeper not to admit him again. I cannot be troubled with every tramp that passes by."

Simpkins obeyed with alacrity, and the stout Cornishman soon found himself without the massive park gates of the Abbey.

But he seemed in no wise disconcerted. He walked leisurely down to the "Heathcote Arms," and drank a pot of ale, and when the lurid March sunset was reddening the Yorkshire hills Lady Heathcote, looking out from one of the mullioned windows, saw his burly figure standing like a black sentinel just outside the iron gates.

St. Denys Delmar came over from the Anchorage that night to be ready for an early start to Italy on the morrow. The guardian's heart was ill at ease concerning his ward, and he was determined that there should be no farther delay. So he came up for the night, and was sitting in the western drawing-room with Lady Heathcote, when, just as the turret clock struck nine, another visitor was announced, and this visitor was Father Anselm.

From under his mystic cowl the monk's hollow eyes burned like living coals.

Lady Heathcote thrilled with terror to her very finger-tips as she sat waiting for him to disclose the purpose of his visit.

But St. Denys was too impatient to wait.

"We were just on the point of starting for Italy," he said; "I've been so uneasy about the child—Lady Grace, I mean. My good priest, do let us know how she fares."

"She fares well," replied the monk, in a sepulchral voice; "she is in heaven!"

St. Denys bounded to his feet, and Lady Heathcote uttered a sharp cry.

"What?" cried the former, catching at the monk's arm; "what do you say?"

"I say that Lady Grace Heathcote is dead and in heaven!" he replied, with awful distinctness.

Then, for the space of a minute, the three seemed stricken into stone.

Lady Heathcote sat staring at the carpet, scarcely daring to draw her breath, and St. Denys stood white and stunned, while the friar eyed them covertly, with a curious, sinister glance.

The guardian was the first one to speak.

"I can never forgive myself," he cried, in agonized accents; "her father left her to my care, and I failed in my duty. Poor Gracie, poor little one; she wanted to stay at home, but we forced her to go, and she's dead."

Her ladyship burst into a fit of hysterical sobbing, deploring the loss of her darling child, and striving to exonerate herself from all blame—a scene which seemed to afford the monk a secret kind of amusement.

When quiet was restored, and the parties had regained a degree of composure, he related the sad occurrence in detail. Lady Grace, a week or two previous to her death, took a fancy to visit a noted monastery near the northern confines of Italy, and accordingly set out in company with several superior sisters, and attended by Father Anselm himself. They made a very pleasant and instructive visit, and Lady Grace started homeward more determined and enthusiastic than ever. But on the road she fell ill,

and became unable at last to travel. They halted at Milan, and there, though every attention was bestowed upon her, and the best medical aid called in, she died. They brought her body home to the Sacred Heart, and it now reposed in the convent vault, awaiting the action of her friends.

This was Father Anselm's story.

The following morning was wild and stormy, the March winds shrieked amid the grim turrets of the old Abbey, and whirled and tossed the branches of the oaks, and a chill, drizzling rain enveloped the earth in a leaden pall; but the journey to Italy was not postponed.

St. Denys and Lady Heathcote started with Father Anselm to bring home the remains of Heathcote's hapless heiress.

Sadly and slowly they drove under the tossing oak branches, and as the great iron gates swung open, and the handsome carriage, emblazoned with the Heathcote arms, drove out, the huge figure of the Cornish seaman emerged from a thicket near by, and followed them with the dogged determination of a sleuth-hound.

It is unnecessary to chronicle their journey to Italy. They reached the Sacred Heart, and there, in the grim old vault, was a slender, simple coffin of the Milan make, bearing the name of Lady Grace in silver letters.

St. Denys, indulging a foolish fancy that the whole thing was a terrible mistake, caused the coffin to be opened, and when he saw the graceful, girlish figure in its spotless robes, the mask, folded hands, the sweet, fair face, with all its golden hair put out of sight, he sat down and wept and sobbed like a woman.

The coffin was enclosed in a metallic case, and the mournful party returned to England.

Then there was a grand funeral. Half the county turned out to follow the lovely young creature to her final resting-place.

Friends and acquaintances came down from London, Father Anselm and half a dozen illustrious personages from the Convent of the Sacred Heart, and, last of all, Sir Ruthven Remington—a forlorn, heart-broken old man—came up from the Hermitage.

The long line of carriages stretched for miles across the Heathcote grounds, and thus grandly and sincerely mourned the young heiress of the Abbey was borne down to the ancient burying-place, and laid to rest in the marble mausoleum, where so many of her ancestors reposed.

Solemnly through the dark branches of the funeral yews dripped the spring rains, while afar in the west, like a harbinger of hope, even in the midst of death and woe, an arching rainbow glittered.

(To be continued.)

DR. CARPENTER ON EPIDEMIC DELUSIONS.—On a recent Sunday afternoon a very large congregation gathered together in St. George's Hall, Langham Place, London, to hear Dr. Carpenter lecture on "Epidemic Delusions, with a reference to 'Spiritualistic' manifestations." The audience consisted for the most part of gentlemen and ladies of the upper middle class. The object of the lecture was to show that under certain conditions the will was so feeble that it had not sufficient control over the body, and this control might be restored by means of a strong external stimulant. Hysteria is one of the best-known instances of this phenomenon. Not only will a girl affected by this complaint be unable to resist violent fits of laughter and sobbing, but other persons will on seeing her become excited in the same way. Every one knows that the best remedy in such cases is to appeal to fear by means of threats. One doctor cured a chronic case by putting a poker in the fire and remarking that the only remedy was to burn the arm of the patient with red-hot iron. Another said that a strong electric shock was the best medicine. In each case the mere threat was sufficient, for the will was stimulated to volition sufficiently strong to repress the abnormal action. Then there is the well-known case of the mewing nuns. One nun began to mew like a cat, and professed to be unable to stop herself. Soon all the other nuns followed, and the sacred building resounded with their caterwauling. These human grimalkins thereby gave great scandal, but some wise person ordered up a file of soldiers armed with whips, and it was announced that the first sister who mewed again would be whipped. There was no need to apply the cat-o'-nine-tails, for the sisters ceased to be cats. The mews were no more heard of, and the nuns were once more stable. Then Dr. Carpenter told the story of the Black Death and the Flagellants; then the witchcraft prosecutions of two centuries back, when hundreds of persons were burnt as witches, after the most careful inquiry, and upon evidence more conclusive and overwhelming than any other evidence ever offered. Nevertheless, the prosecutions suddenly ceased, and nothing more was heard of witchcraft directly

it became known that the prosecutors, "God's own elect," were suspected of witchcraft. They thought it was high time to suspend the prosecutions for a while, and with them the stories of witchcraft came to an end. The influence of sympathy is well known. Dr. Carpenter mentioned that he had often been thoroughly ashamed of himself because he found it impossible to refrain from stammering when talking to a person who stammered. The contagious influence of a yawn is known to everybody. An amusing instance of it was given by the lecturer. A certain professor at Glasgow, he said, was so unfortunate as to get his lower jaw dislocated when he yawned widely. This was well known to the students, and it was one of their favourite jokes when they had what they thought enough of one of the professor's lectures to begin to yawn all round. The professor found it impossible to avoid following suit. He yawned too, and went his jaw, and the lecture necessarily came to an end.

A DARING GAME; ON, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was indeed poor Lally Bird, the wronged young wife, whom her husband mourned as dead, who, crouching in the shelter of the way-side thicket, stared after Neva Wynde and Rufus Black with eyes full of a burning woe and despair.

"He loves her! he loves her!" the poor young creature moaned, in the utter abandonment of her terrible anguish. "He said her answer meant life and death to him! And I am so soon forgotten! Oh, he never loved me—never—never! And he does love her with all his soul—Oh, Heaven!"

She sank back into the deeper shadow of the thicket, moaning and wringing her hands.

Her hat had fallen off, and her face was upturned to the gray evening sky. That face, still childlike in its outlines and in its innocence, yet sharp of feature, wan, thin, and haggard, was full of wild beseeching. The great hungry black eyes were upraised to Heaven in agonised appeal.

How terribly alone in all the wide world she was! Alone and friendless, with no roof to shelter her, no food to break a long fast, no money. She was ragged and forlorn, her feet peeping from their frail coverings, her sharpened elbows protruding through her sleeves. And now her last hope had been dashed from her, and it seemed as if nothing remained to her but to die.

The story of her life from the moment in which she had fled from her dingy lodgings at New Brompton had been one of bitterness and privation.

When she had escaped from her only shelter, half maddened and wholly despairing, with the voices of Craven Black and Mrs. McKellar yet ringing in her ears, her first impulse had been self-destruction. She had sped along the streets until, by a circuitous route, she had gained the river and a jutting pier, but it was daylight, and people were in waiting for the boats, so her dread purpose was checked, and she wandered on, wild of face and half distraught, keeping the river ever in sight, as if the view of its waters soothed her mad despair.

Wandering aimlessly onward, she passed through foul river streets, where the vile of every sort congregated, but no one spoke to her or molested her. The shield of a watchful Providence interposed between her and all harm. Once or twice some ruffian would have accosted and stayed her, but a glance into her white and rigid face and wild, unseeing eyes made him shrink back aghast, and she sped on as if pursued, not knowing the dangers she had escaped.

She grew weary of foot, and to the wildness of her anguish succeeded a morbid apathy, which steeped her senses. The night came on; the gas lamps were lighted in the streets; the warehouses and shops were closed; there were fewer people in the streets; and in happy homes in the suburbs, at the north and south and east and west of the great, teeming city, wives and daughters were gathered into pleasant homes. But she had no home, no refuge, no shelter. She had—oh, saddest of words, and saddest of meanings—she had nowhere to go!

So she plodded on, slowly and wearily now. She had traversed miles since leaving her lodgings, and it seemed as if her march, like that of the fabled Wandering Jew, must be eternal.

At last, still wandering without aim, she staggered through the toll-gate and out upon Waterloo Bridge, in the wake of a party of returning play-goers. No one noticed her, and she passed half-way over the bridge and sank down upon one of the stone benches, while the party she had followed went on and were soon lost to view in the Waterloo Road.

She was alone on the bridge, in the night and darkness. Below her lay the dark river, its broad surface

dotted with numerous craft reposing in the gloom. Somerset House, dark and silent, like some gigantic mausoleum, lay to her left. Along the river banks were the great warehouses, long since closed for the night, and in the distance the dome of St. Paul's reared its head, faint and shadowy, among the deeper shadows.

The glancing lights of the river boats, the lamps at the landing and along the shores looked strangely unreal to Lally's dazed eyes. She crouched in a corner of the seat and peered over the parapet and tried to think, but her brain seemed paralyzed. The only thought that came to her was that she was no wife, that Rufus had abandoned and disowned her, and that he was to marry another.

People crossed the bridge in laughing groups, as the Strand theatres closed, but no one paid heed to, even if they saw, the slender, crouching figure with its wild, staring eyes. Sometimes, for many minutes together, Lally was alone upon that portion of the bridge—alone with her desperate soul and her terrible temptation to end her sorrows in one fatal plunge.

She arose in one of these intervals to her feet upon the bench and leaned over the parapet, a prayer upon her lips that Heaven would forgive the deed she meditated. And as she stood poised for the leap into eternity there came back to her, though years had passed since she heard it, the voice of her mother, as she had once listened to it, denouncing the self-murderer as one who destroys his soul as well as his body. The remembrance of the words, and the thought of her mother, caused her to drop again into the corner of her bench sobbing, and weeping a storm of tears that saved her reason.

The wild outburst of her anguish had been succeeded by a strange dulness and apathy, when a woman—a mere girl—"bonnelless, and her hair flying,"—as the Blacks had read in the paper—came running upon the bridge, with moans upon her lips. This girl came up to the very niche where Lally was hidden, and sprang upon the bench. She gave one wild look over her shoulder at the officer who pursued her, then, with the name of some man upon her lips, tossed up her arms, and sprang over the parapet—into eternity!

Lally uttered a cry of horror.

"It might have been me!" was her first thought, and, trembling and terrified, she looked over at the whirling figure as it struck heavily upon a passing boat.

And in the same instant Lally's handkerchief, with her name marked upon it, which she had held in her hand, dropped over the parapet upon the body of the woman. That accident it was that changed poor Lally's destiny. For the poor suicide was she of whose death Rufus Black read in the paper of the following morning, and Lally's handkerchief found upon the water beside the dead girl gave the impression that the suicide was Lally Bird.

The presence of Lally upon the bridge escaped the notice of the officer, who turned and ran along the bridge to the end, and hurried down to the pier, whither the rescued body of the suicide was being carried.

People began to gather upon the bridge, seeming almost to spring up miraculously, and Lally, fearing questioning, or detention as witness of the suicide, arose and went back by the way she had come, up Wellington Street into the Strand.

She was sufficiently herself by this time to know she must seek shelter for the night; but whither could she go? What respectable inn would give shelter to one so forlorn of aspect, so utterly alone, as she? She would be driven forth as something disreputable and unclean, should she demand lodgings at such an inn. She had money in her pocket—the share Rufus had given her of the ten pounds his father had sent him—but she might almost as well have been penniless, since her money could not procure her respectable shelter for the night.

There might be some home for friendly wanderers, some asylum for respectable women, where she could pass the dangerous hours of darkness, but she knew of none. The omnibuses were still running, it not being yet midnight, and Lally, being too tired to walk farther, signalled one and took her seat in it.

A long ride followed over rough pavements, past dingy rows of shops and houses, past miniature villas in small gardens, looking like toy establishments, and through a more sparsely settled region. Lally, overcome with fatigue, dozed most of the time, and was at length rudely awakened from her slumbers by the stopping of the omnibus and the rough voice of the conductor bidding her alight.

She got out, feeling quite dazed, and saw that the omnibus had stopped at the end of its route, and that the horses were already unhitched and being led into the stable. She crept away, not knowing whither to go, not even knowing where she was.

Plodding on wearily, now and then clinging to some way-side fence or wall for a moment's rest, she

came out upon a wide, deserted heath, open to whoever might choose to camp upon it. This was Hampstead Heath. She walked out upon the turf for some distance, and lay down in the shelter of a furze-patch, thinking she was going to die. The skies were dark above her, and all around her the black gloom brooded, covering her from the sight of any tramps who might be taking their sleep that summer night upon the same broad common.

And here Lally slept the sleep of utter weariness. She awakened at the dawn of the new day, and started up, with a wild look around her.

There were donkeys of diminutive breed grazing around her, a few tramps rising lazily from the ground, and a score of industrious people, men, women, boys, and girls, digging up groundsel, chickweed, and other green weeds, to sell in the great city for the sustenance of birds.

Lally wonderingly surveyed this species of industry, of which she had not previously suspected the existence, then hastily took her departure, not even tempted to prolong her stay by the offer of some bread and cheese from an old, blackened chimney-sweep, who had evidently also slept upon the heath.

All thoughts of self-destruction had gone from her mind, and the question as to her future course now presented itself. The school with which she had formerly been connected as music teacher was broken up, and among the few people whom she had known there was only one to whom she was tempted to go in her distress. That one was an old, consumptive woman who had been "wardrobe mistress" at the seminary during Lally's stay there—that is, the old woman had mended and darned the garments of the pupils, and had supported herself on her meagre pay. She lived at Notting Hill, the school having been located in that neighbourhood, and Lally knew her address. The old woman had been kind to her, and Lally resolved to seek her.

She walked a portion of the distance, and availed herself of the aid of omnibuses when she could. Yet the morning was far advanced when the girl climbed the rickety stairs to the garret of her old friend, and timidly knocked for admittance.

The old woman was at home, busy with her needle, and gave Lally admittance. More—when she heard her pitiful story, she gave the girl sympathy and the tenderest kindness. She was very near her grave, and very poor, but she offered Lally a share of her home, and the girl gratefully accepted it. Here she ate breakfast. During the day her old friend borrowed a copy of the morning's paper, as was her daily custom, and Lally read in it the account of the suicide on Waterloo Bridge, her name being given—to her utter amazement—as that of the self-murderess.

Having a conviction that Rufus would see the same notice, as indeed he had done, she visited the police station to which the body of the suicide had been conveyed with a yearning in her heart to see her young husband as he should bend over the poor, mutilated form, believing it to be her own, and to relieve his anguish and remorse. But Rufus came not, and the suicide was buried in a pauper's grave.

Lally went back to the garret at Notting Hill with a strange gloom on her face, and shared the labours of the old seamstress, gradually assuming the entire support of her friend, as the old woman's strength failed. She did all the sewing her friend—who was now wardrobe mistress at a boys' school—had engaged to do, and nursed her with a daughter's tenderness, actually starving herself to nourish her only friend, watching by day and night at her side, denying herself food, clothes, and needed rest to take care of the one who had befriended her; but with all her care and kindness the old woman faded day by day, and early in September died, invoking with her last breath blessings on Lally's name.

The few sticks of furniture were sold to give the old woman a decent burial. Lally was out of money.—out of everything. The superintendent of the boys' school refused to allow her to continue the duties she had performed in the old woman's name, alleging that she was too young. And, as a last blow, she was turned out of her lodgings because of her inability to pay the rent.

At this crisis of her history, when as it seemed only death presented an open door to her, she resolved to go down to Wyndham and look once more on her husband's face.

To think, with our desperate Lally, was to act. She set out to walk to Wyndham, working in the hop-fields for sustenance as she went. Thus she did three full days of work before she arrived near her destination, and she had crept into the way-side thicket to rest before continuing her journey to Wyndham when she chanced to overhear the conversation between Neva Wynde and Rufus Black.

Her despair, as she listened to the words of her young husband in declaring his love for Neva, may be imagined. She did not know how bitterly he

had mourned for his lost young wife; she did not dream that she was dearer to him still than Neva could ever be. How could she tell, when listening to his passionate vows of love to Miss Wynde, that the young wife who had shared his poverty was in his thoughts by day and by night, and was regarded by him as a holy, precious memory?

"It's all over!" she sobbed, pressing her face down upon the dewy turf. "I am forgotten—but why should I not be? I never was his wife. He said so himself in his letter to me that I carry still next my heart. Not his wife—but she will be! How beautiful she is! How lovely her face was, how clear her voice! She would pity me if she knew, but she is an heiress, I daresay, while I am only the poor outcast Rufus has made me! Oh, Rufus, Rufus!"

She wailed aloud, but she had learned to bear her griefs in silence, and presently she struggled to her feet and walked in the direction in which the heiress and her lover had gone—the same way by which Lally had recently come.

There was no need for her to go to Wyndham now. Her presence there, or her appearance to Rufus, might embarrass his relations with his newer love, and possibly interfere with his marriage. He thought her dead, and had not even come forward to claim the body he supposed to be hers. Ah, yes, she had never been his wife, and she was forgotten. She would never cross his path again.

She staggered wearily along the road, in and out of the beaten footpath, with the twilight deepening around her, and with a deeper twilight settling down upon her heart and brain. She passed the Hawkhurst park, the picturesque stone lodge guarding the great bronze gates, and here she paused.

The lodge was closed and a faint light streamed out through the dotted white curtains.

Lally crept close to the great gates formed of bronze spears tipped with gilt, like the gates of the Tuileries gardens at Paris, and, pressing her face against the cool rods, looked up the avenue.

At the distance of half a mile or more the great graystone mansion sat throned upon a broad ridge of land, and lights flared from the wide uncurtained windows far up on the terrace, and the glass dome of flowers was all alight, and the stately old house looked to the homeless wanderer down by the gates like Paradise.

Her eager eyes searched the terrace, and, inch by inch, the great tree-arched avenue.

Midway up the avenue, walking slowly as lovers walk, she saw her young husband and Neva Wynde. With great, jealous eyes she watched their progress through the shadows, and when they paused in the stream of light upon the terrace, and Rufus Black bent low towards the heiress, a great flame leaped into poor Lally's sombre eyes, and she caught her breath sharply.

The heiress and her suitor stood for some moments upon the terrace, unconscious of the eyes upon them. Rufus declined to go into the house that evening, alleging his agitation as an excuse. Neva took her small parcel which he had carried, and he seized her hand, uttering passionate words of love, and begging her to look favourably upon his suit. Then, not waiting for an answer, he pressed her hand to his lips, and dashed down the avenue toward the gates, while Neva entered the house.

All this the jealous, disowned wife saw, with her face growing death-like, and the flame burning yet more brightly in her sombre eyes.

"She has accepted him," she muttered. "She will not take the week to consider his suit. They are betrothed. I was sure she lived here. Perhaps she owns the place, and he will be its master. They will both be rich and happy and beloved, while I—Ah, how swiftly he comes! He walked like that the night I accepted him. But I am not his wife; I never was, even when I thought myself so. He must not see me. No shadow from the past must darken his happy life—his and hers. It is all over—all over—and I shall never see his face again!"

With one last, long, lingering look, and a sob that came from her very soul, she turned and sped down the road like a mad creature—away from Wyndham and from Rufus, and all her hopes—going, ah, whither?

And Rufus, with his new love-dream glowing in his soul, came out of the Hawkhurst grounds, and hurried toward his inn, never dreaming how near he had been to his lost wife, nor how surely he had lost her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UPON his return to the Wyndham inn Rufus Black found his father awaiting him in their private parlour. The elder Black arched his brows inquiringly as his son came in, and Rufus bowed to him gaily as he said:

"Well, father, you ought to be pleased with me now. I have offered myself to Miss Wynde."

Craven Black started.

"She has accepted you?" he demanded.

"Not yet. She wants to think the matter over, and I have consented to let the thing rest where it is for a week. I take it as a good sign that she did not refuse me at once. Her hesitation implies a regard for me—"

"Or a sense of duty toward some one else," muttered Craven Black. "Curse that letter. If I had seen the girl I would never have written it."

"What is it you say, father? I did not catch your words?"

"They were not meant for your ears. So Miss Wynde demands a week in which to consider your offer. It would be proper for you to refrain from going to Hawkhurst to-morrow. I'll explain to her that you remained away from motives of delicacy."

"Which I shall not do," said Rufus, doggedly. "I shall go to Hawkhurst to-morrow evening. I will not leave the field clear to Lord Towyn. He's an earl, rich, handsome, and intellectual, the very man to capture a girl's heart; and if I know myself I am not going to give him a clear field. Why, he loves her better than I do even, and I can only come out ahead of him by dint of sheer persistence. It's a mystery to me how she refrained from saying No to me when she can have Lord Towyn if she chooses. There is something behind her hesitation, some hidden cause—"

"Which you will do well to let alone," interposed his father. "'Take the goods the gods provide' without questioning."

Rufus was not satisfied, but concluded to act upon this advice.

The next morning Craven Black attired himself with unusual care, and mounted his piebald horse, a new purchase, and set out alone at a slow canter for Hawkhurst. He knew that the heiress usually took a morning ride, attended only by her groom, and he knew in what direction these rides usually lay. It was impossible for him to demand a private interview with her at her home without exciting the suspicions and jealousy of Lady Wynde, and he was determined to see the heiress alone and discover in what estimation she held him. He was also determined not to accept quietly the four thousand a year of the baronet's widow until he knew beyond all peradventure that he could not obtain the seventy thousand per annum of the baronet's daughter.

He rode up to Hawkhurst Lodge, slackening his speed, but not pausing. As it happened a little boy, a son of the lodge-keeper, was playing in the road, and Craven Black tossed him a sixpence and demanded if Miss Wynde were out riding, and which way she had gone.

"Dingle Farm way," said the archer, scrambling in the dust for the shining coin. "She been gone a long time."

"Who is with her?" asked Craven Black.

"Jim the groom—that be all."

Black put spurs to his horse and dashed on. He knew where Dingle Farm was, it having been pointed out to him by Lady Wynde as a portion of the Hawkhurst property. The ride was a favourite one with Neva, being unusually diversified. The road led through Dingle Wood, across a common, and skirted a chalk-pit of unusual size and depth.

Craven Black turned off from the main road into a narrower one that led across the country, and pursued this course until he entered into the cool shadows of Dingle Wood. Still riding briskly, he came out a little later upon the Dingle common, a square mile of unfenced heath, covered with furze bushes. At the farther edge of the common was the chalk-pit, now disused. The road ran dangerously near to the precipitous side of the pit, and there was no railing or fence to serve as a safeguard. Beyond the chalk-pit lay Dingle Farm, a cozy, red brick farmhouse, embowered with trees.

The morning was clear and bright, and the sun was shining. As Craven Black emerged from the shadow of the wood he swept a keen glance over the level common, and beheld, a mile or more away beyond the chalk-pit, but approaching it, the figure of Miss Wynde.

She was superbly mounted upon a thorough-bred horse, and was followed at a little distance by her groom.

Even at that distance Craven Black noticed how well Neva sat her horse, how erectly she carried her lithe, light figure, how proudly the little head was poised upon her shoulders. She was coming on towards him at a sweeping pace, her long green robe fluttering in the swift breeze she made.

"She will be a wife to be proud of," thought Craven Black, with a strange stirring at his heart. "How fearless she is. One would think she would pass the chalk-pit at a walk, but it is evident she does not intend to."

He dashed on to meet her.

Neva saw him coming, recognized him, and the close

grasp upon her bridal rein relaxed, and the fierce gallop subsided into a quiet canter.

She was past the chalk-pit when he came up to her, and she bowed to him coldly, but courteously.

"Good-morning, Miss Wynde," said Mr. Black. "You were having a fast ride here. I fairly shuddered when I saw you coming. A single sheer on the part of your horse would have sent you over the precipice."

"Oh, Badjour and I understand each other," said Neva, lightly, patting the horse's proudly arched neck. "I never ride a horse, Mr. Black, if I have not confidence in my ability to control him."

"But the road is so narrow and dangerous at this point," said Craven Black, wheeling and riding slowly at her side.

"You are right, Mr. Black. The road must be fenced in. I will speak to Lord Towyn about it."

"And why not to Sir John Freise or Mr. Atkins, who are equally your guardians?" asked Craven Black, with an attempt at playfulness.

"Because I presume I shall see Lord Towyn first," replied Neva, gravely. "What do you say to a race, Mr. Black? I see that you are about to return with me."

Craven Black looked over his shoulder. The discreet groom had fallen behind out of ear-shot. Now was the time to make his declaration of love. Such an opportunity might not again occur.

"The truth is, Miss Wynde," he exclaimed, "I came out to meet you. I want to have a quiet talk with you, if you will hear me."

Neva bowed her head gravely, and her reins fell loosely in her gauntleted hand. They were out upon the wide common now, Dingle Farm behind them, Dingle Wood ahead.

"You may guess the nature of the communication I have to make to you, Miss Wynde," said her elderly lover, with an appearance of agitation, a portion of which was genuine. "That which I have to say would be more fittingly said in some other position perhaps. I should prefer to say it on my knees to you, as the knights made love in olden times."

"Oh!" said Neva. "Haden't we better move on faster, Mr. Black?"

"Coquettish like all of your sex!" said Craven Black, drawing nearer to her. "You understand my meaning, Neva? You know that I love you—I who never loved before—"

"Surely," cried Neva, with an arch sparkle in her red-brown eyes, "you did not perjure yourself when you married the mother of your son?"

Craven Black bit his lips fiercely, but said, smilingly:

"That marriage was one of convenience. No love entered into it, on my side at least. I never loved till I met you, fair Neva. You have younger suitors, but not one among them all who will be to you what I would be—your slave, your minister, your subject."

"I should want my husband to be my king," murmured Neva, softly, "and I would be his queen."

"That arrangement would suit me perfectly," declared Craven Black, feeling a little awkward at his love-making, not altogether sure Neva was not secretly laughing at him, yet eagerly catching at the assistance her words afforded him. "I would be your king, Miss Neva—"

He paused in anger as the girl's light laugh made music in his ears that he by no means appreciated. His anger deepened as Neva looked at him with a bright sauciness, a piquant witchery of eyes and mouth.

"You are very kind," the girl laughed, "but I do not think—pardon me, Mr. Black—that you are of the material of which kings of the kind I meant are made!"

Craven Black's fair face flushed. He tugged at his light beard with nerveless fingers. An angry light glowered in his light eyes.

"I may not know the full meaning of your words, Miss Neva," he said, forcing himself to speak calmly.

"A romantic young girl like you is sure to have many fancies which time will prune. A young girl's fancy is like the overflowing of some graceful rose-tree. When time shall have picked off a bud here, a leaf there, or a half-blown rose elsewhere, the remainder of the blossoming will be more perfect. I am no knight of romance, but I am not aware that there is anything ridiculous in my face or figure. Ladies of the world have smiled graciously upon me, and more than one peeress would have taken my name had I but asked her. My heart is fresh and young, full of romantic visions like yours. My love is honest, and a king could offer no better. Miss Wynde, I ask you to be my wife!"

Neva's face was grave now, but the sparkle was still in her eyes as she said:

"I am sure I beg your pardon, Mr. Black, but I thought you were a suitor of Mrs. Artress. I never had an idea that your visits were directed to me. I

am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me—I suppose that is the proper remark to make under the circumstances—but I must decline it."

"And why, if I may be allowed to ask?" demanded Craven Black, his face deepening in hue nearly to purple. "Why this insulting refusal of an honest offer of marriage, Miss Wynde?"

Neva regarded her angry suitor with cool gravity. "I beg your pardon if the manner of my refusal seemed insulting," she said, gently, "but the idea seems so singular—so preposterous! At the risk of offending you again, Mr. Black, I must suggest that a union with Mrs. Artress would be more suitable. I am only a girl, and young still, as you know, and it is proper that youth should mate with youth."

"You prefer my son, then?"

"To you? I do."

"And you will marry him?"

The lovely face shadowed, but Neva answered, quietly:

"Mr. Rufus has asked me that question, sir, and I prefer to have him receive his answer from my lips. Whatever my feelings may be towards him I have no indecision in regard to you."

"And you actually and decidedly refuse me?"

"Actually and decidedly, Mr. Black."

"Is there no hope that you may change your mind, Miss Wynde? Will no devotion upon my part affect your resolution?"

"None whatever. I cannot even give your proposal serious consideration, Mr. Black. I am willing to regard you as a friend. As a lover, pardon me, you would be intolerable to me."

Neva spoke with an honest frankness that increased Craven Black's anger. He saw that he had no chance of winning her love or her fortune, and it behaved him not to lose the lesser fortune and lesser charms of her step-mother. He tried to take his failure philosophically, but in refusing his love Neva had made him her bitter and unscrupulous enemy.

"I accept my defeat, Miss Wynde," he said, bitterly, "and resign all my pretensions to your hand. Pardon my folly, and forget it. I hope my son will meet with better success in his suit. And may I ask as a favour that you will keep my proposal secret, not even telling it to your step-mother?"

"I am not in the habit of boasting of such things, even to Lady Wynde," said Neva, coldly. "Your proposal, Mr. Black, is already forgotten."

They were in Dingle Wood now, and the heiress struck her horse sharply and dashed away at a canter.

Craven Black kept pace with her, and at a discreet distance behind followed the liveried groom.

Neither spoke again until they were out of the wood, and had traversed the cross-road and gained the highway.

When the gray towers of Hawkhurst loomed up in full view their speed slackened, and Craven Black said, hastily:

"One word, Miss Wynde. I have your solemn promise, have I not, that you will never betray the fact that I have proposed marriage to you?"

Neva bowed haughtily.

"Since you have not confidence in my delicacy," she said, "I will give the promise."

Craven Black's face flushed with something of triumph. He was still smarting with his anger and disappointment, still secretly fuming with a bitter rage, but he desired to show Neva that he was not at all crushed or humiliated.

"Thank you," he said. "I shall rely upon that promise. The truth is, Miss Neva, a betrayal of my secret would cause me serious trouble. Ladies never pardon even a slight and temporary disaffection like mine. I am engaged to be married, and my promised bride is the most exacting of women. She would rage if she knew that I had looked with love upon one so many years her junior."

"Indeed! You will marry Artress then?"

"Artress?" ejaculated Black, in well-counterfeited amazement. "What, marry the companion when I can have the mistress? No, indeed, Miss Neva. I am engaged to Lady Wynde!"

"To Lady Wynde—to my father's widow?"

Black bowed assent.

Neva was astounded. She had been too busy with her friends since her return to Hawkhurst to detect the real object of Craven Black's visits, and both Lady Wynde and Black had conspired to hoodwink her. She had never contemplated the possibility of Lady Wynde marrying for the third time. The idea almost appeared sacrilegious. Her father had seemed to her so grand and noble, so above other men, that she had not deemed it possible for a woman who had once been honoured with his love to marry another.

"It is like Marie Louise, who married her cham-

berlain after having been the wife of Napoleon," she thought. "It is incredible. I refuse to believe it!"

Her incredulity betrayed itself in her face.

"You don't believe it?" said Black, with a mocking smile. "It is true, I assure you. Lady Wynde and I became engaged before your return from school. We are to be married next month. Her trousseau is secretly preparing in London."

His manner convinced Neva that he spoke the truth.

"So," she said, her lip curling, "when your wedding-day is so near, and the woman you have won is making ready for your marriage, you amuse yourself in talking love to me! That is your idea of honour, Mr. Black? You are well named. Craven by name, and craven by nature!"

She inclined her head haughtily and dashed on. Black, checking with rage, hurried in close pursuit. The lodge gates swung open at their approach, and they galloped up the avenue.

Lady Wynde came out upon the terrace to meet them. Neva dismounted at the carriage porch, the terrace being only upon one side of the mansion, and with a haughty little bow to Lady Wynde passed into the house.

Black dismounted and gave his horse in charge of the stable lad who had taken in hand the horse of Neva, then walked towards the open drawing-room window with his betrothed wife.

"What is the matter between you and Neva, Craven?" asked Lady Wynde, jealously. "You look as black as a thundercloud, and she looked like an insulted queen. What have you been saying to her?"

"I thought it time to divulge our secret to her, my darling," said Black, hypocritically. "Our wedding-day is so near that I deemed it best to inform her. I met her out riding, and seized upon the occasion to declare the truth."

"And what did she say?"

"She fairly withered me with her scorn; recommended me to marry Matilda Artress, and seemed to regard my marriage with her father's widow as a species of sacrifice. I hate her!" he hissed between his clenched teeth.

Lady Wynde smiled, well pleased.

"So do I," she acknowledged, frankly. "But it is for our interest to counterfeits friendship for her. Be patient, Craven. Some day you and I may bring down her haughty pride to the dust."

"Suppose she should refuse Rufus?"

"You and I will soon be married, Craven, and in our union is strength. Tell Rufus to write to Neva, delaying her answer to his suit for a month. By that time we shall be married. If she should refuse then to accept your son as her husband, we can contrive some way to compel her obedience. I am her step-mother and guardian, and have authority which I shall use if I be pushed to the wall. I promise you, Craven, that we shall secure our ten thousand a year out of Neva's fortune, and that we shall compel the girl to marry your son. Leave it all to me. Only wait and see!"

(To be continued.)

HOW MEN SHOULD TREAT WOMEN.—A Persian poet gives the following instruction upon this important subject:—"When thou art married seek to please thy wife; but listen not to all she says. From a man's right side a rib was taken to form the woman, and never was there seen a rib quite straight. And wouldst thou straighten it? It breaks, but bends not. Since, then, 'tis plain that crooked is woman's temper, forgive her faults and blame her not; nor let her anger thee, nor coercion use, as all is vain to straighten what is curved."

DISCOVERY OF A PAINTING BY TENIERS.—M. De Loecker, director of public sales at Antwerp, says the *Nord*, was lately called to a house in that town, where he was offered a lot of old pictures, one of which was on wood. He bought the whole for a trifling sum, and sold them again to a picture dealer at Roubaix, the panel being valued at 126 fr.; but an artist, who afterwards examined it, declared that it was a production of David Teniers. It represents a watercourse with two small boats, and a few peasants on the bank. The painting has been cleaned and restored at Antwerp, and will be shortly exhibited at the Cercle Artistique of Brussels.

THE SUEZ CANAL.—The *Spectator*, ridiculing the shower of prophecies with which Continental journals received the news of the success of the Suez Canal, to the effect that Great Britain was to lose, first her commerce, then her commercial navy, then her supremacy at sea, and, finally, her Indian possessions, that the Mediterranean States were to recover their long-lost Oriental trade, and M. Lesseps was to be the avenger of 100 seaboard cities ruined by the avarice of England, quotes the official return of the tonnage and nationality of the ships passing

through the Canal in 1871:—British, 546,621; French, 91,841; Austrian, 48,118; Italian, 29,499; Turkish, 16,959; Egyptian, 13,894; Dutch, 6,711; Russian, 4,820; Belgian, 4,406; American, 4,170; German, 3,620; Spanish, 3,187; Norwegian, 1,816; Portuguese, 919; Danish, 660; Rumanian, 408. Total, 771,409.

GREEN-ROOMS OF THE PAST.—The "first green-room"—for there was a "second" in those days for the ballet and chorus, besides the room for "the superns"—the first green-room of either of the great theatres royal at the time of my introduction to them was certainly one of the most delightful resorts in London, combining the elegance and courtesy of fashionable life with all the wit, mirth, and "admirable fooling" to be found in literary, theatrical, and artistic circles. Presided over by men of liberal education, accustomed to the highest society, however great the fun, it never degenerated into coarseness nor passed the bounds of good breeding. No visitor was allowed to enter who was not in full evening dress. Even the actors were excluded, if in boots, unless when attired in their stage habiliments. The principal ladies had each her page waiting in the corridor to pick up her train as she issued from the green-room, and bow it to the wing or other point of her entrance on the stage. "Neus avons changé tout cela." Whether for the better or not I leave others to say.—E.

A SISTER.

He who has never known a sister's kind ministrations, nor felt his heart warming beneath her endearing smile and love-beaming eye, has been unfortunate indeed. It is not to be wondered if the fountains of pure feeling flow in his bosom but sluggishly; or if the gentler emotions of his nature be lost in the sterner attributes of manhood.

"That man has grown up among kind and affectionate sisters," I once heard a lady of much observation and experience remark.

"Why do you think so?" said I.

"Because of the rich development of all the tenderer and more refined feelings of the heart, which are so apparent in every word."

A sister's influence is felt even in manhood's later years; and the heart of him who has grown cold in its chilling contact with the world will warm and thrill with pure enjoyment, as some incident awakes within him the soft tones and glad melodies of his sister's voice. And he will turn from purposes which a warped and false philosophy has reasoned into expediency, and even weep for the gentler influences which moved him in his earlier years. W.

Mrs. SHARPE ERSKINE has left all her property for the establishment and maintenance of a museum, of the fine arts, to be called the "Erskine of Torrie Institution." Her house of Duninmarle, which now contains a small but very choice collection of paintings, chiefly of the Flemish school, is to be devoted to the reception of the intended museum.

DRAPESS AND COMPRESSED AIR.—In the construction of a bridge over the Rhone, between St. Maurice and Bex, M. Cuenod, the engineer, used an apparatus for fixing the piles beneath the level of the water in a gravelly soil. He noticed a curious but well-known effect upon the men employed within the compressed air. In the case of some their deafness became sensibly diminished. Artists ought to have found in this fact something suggestive.

LONG REIGNS OF ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS.—In tracing the rise and growth of the British Constitution historians have not made so much as they might have done of the length of many of the reigns. This has admitted of steady if slow development, which might not have been the case with more frequent changes in the head of the Government. A change every four years, says the *Leisure Hour*, may suit the constitution of the tall American pine, but would not be so favourable for the broad British oak. The reigns of only ten Sovereigns covered more than four centuries, the aggregate of the following reigns being 493 years:—Henry I., 36; Henry II., 35; Henry III., 56; Edward I., 35; Edward III., 56; Henry V., 39; Henry VIII., 38; Elizabeth, 45; George II., 34; George III., 60. Queen Victoria will have reigned thirty-five years at the next anniversary of her accession. Her reign already far exceeds that of the oldest Sovereigns of Europe. The Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz dates from 1842; the Duke of Saxe-Coburg from 1844; the Pope from 1846; the Emperor of Austria from 1848; and the Kings of Italy and Holland from 1849. The reign of Victoria began in 1837.

LIGHT ON A DARK SUBJECT.—How often a sound night's sleep changes our feelings towards those who differ from us! And how cautious, after this experience, should we be in our hasty, ill-digested

denunciations of the conduct and opinions of others. Men's stomachs offend more than their hearts go astray. Many a heart-burning toward one another would be spared us could we but look at it in this light.

LAURA GILBERT.

MINE is an utterly commonplace story, not an accident or an escape in the whole of it—just the small happenings of a few months which no one but the individuals concerned noticed much.

Marian Brooks sat with her elbows on the table, her chin in her hands, considering the face in the mirror before her.

It was such a reflection as most people face in the morning. Possibly in last night's excitement, a crowd, perfume, music, and a Paris dress, she might have passed for a beauty. Probably in the careful home toilet of a few hours later some of that divinity would return upon her. Just now the countenance that looked back at her was dull, and colourless, and had the half-disgusted, self-conscious expression which faces in looking-glasses are apt to have under the circumstances.

The door opened behind her, and some one came in. She spoke without turning her head.

"What do people do with the rest of their lives when they have squeezed the brightness all out at twenty-five?"

Laura Gilbert laughed a little musical, well-bred, meaningless laugh and responded:

"What do people do who have never had any brightness in their lives? I accepted a dry shell at seventeen, and have been 'making believe very much' ever since."

Miss Gilbert settled herself with a luxurious yawn in the pillowed depths of an easy-chair. She was dressed with expensive, elegant carelessness. Miss Brooks knew her for the most fireless flirt and party-goer among her acquaintances. And she had a habit of attitudinizing before herself and her special friends as a victim smiling over her own sacrifice. Miss Brooks repressed her own heroics, and relapsed into a patient auditor.

Miss Gilbert really had a bit of romance in her life. When she was seventeen and still a school-girl she received a letter from a man some five years older than herself, asking her to marry him.

There was no earthly reason why she should or shouldn't—she was just as free to follow her own inclinations in this matter as in any other. But the man who proposed in this case was one whom she had not seen for four years. He had gone to Calcutta then, and had stayed there ever since—was likely to stay four years longer, as he told her frankly in the epistle which offered her his hand and growing fortunes.

Laura Gilbert had a marvellous appetite for excitement. The whole thing was sufficiently out of the ordinary tone of her eventless experience to make it attractive. So she wrote back that she would wait for and marry him; and ever since then, having expanded into a beauty and a belle, she had gone about conquering, always retiring in the last scene behind that still unbroken child's engagement.

It gave such an opportunity for graceful, harmless sentimentalizing, and there never had been the slightest danger of her breaking her word; for, leaving out just one little episode which had never amounted to anything at all, her heart had never been touched by anybody.

As to the coming man—having written and posted his proposal in a fit of homesickness, he had, on coming to his senses next day, braced himself for a refusal. Of course it would come. He did not expect—in his heart I believe he did not wish—anything else, except perhaps that he had not been idiot enough to expose himself to being laughed at. So he had very nearly compromised himself with another lady, when one day, months after, the mail came in, and he found himself an engaged man.

So, if Miss Gilbert had only known it, there was a counterpart victim half a world away. Only this one, being masculine, did not wear his chains ornamentally—never said much about his situation any way.

Marian Brooks only knew the story in hints and echoes. Laura folded her helpless white hands before her, and said, sepulchrally:

"He is coming home."

Her hearer turned, listlessly.

"Who is coming?" she said.

"My Calcutta hero. I had a letter to-day forwarded from home. He said he should be here in a fortnight after it came, and a week has gone already. So if I do not hurry back he will be there first."

"You are going, then?"

"Of course; I shall start to-morrow. It's a great bore, with the winter beginning so early and so gay. I counted on another six months at least."

They talked a little more: Miss Brooks warned

into a momentary languid interest in this palpable coming conclusion to what she had regarded as a somewhat mythical romance. Then the two parted, Miss Gilbert to complete her preparations for her return home, Miss Brooks to take up the burden of her daily life again, and dress for callers.

She had had one letter from Miss Gilbert, announcing her safe arrival at home; the days had slid away till they counted ten.

Marian had settled into a calm which she thought befitted her years and exhausted life. Without knowing it, she had accepted the affection of being tired out with the round of gaieties which she would not have missed for a good deal.

One afternoon she had been to a *matinée musicale*. She was coming downstairs in the twilight alone, and thinking about the music. All the latent sadness and capability of tenderness in the girl's nature had been roused by Christine Nilsson's voice. She had a feeling of dreamy exaltation above small matters, from which she was destined to be speedily brought down.

Some one stepped on her dress. She felt herself arrested, heard the ominous creak and tear of rending threads, and turned, with murder in her heart. Behind her stood the criminal—brown with sunburn, bearded to his eyes, and six feet high. He was in that peculiarly graceful attitude into which the unsophisticated man creature is apt to fall on such occasions—trotting on one foot which still held fast the rent silk, and with a look of horrified surprise on his face. Miss Brooks gave her skirts a little lady-like twitch.

"My dress, if you please."

And every word was laden with venom.

"I beg your pardon," he hastily replied, moving awkwardly back.

Marian deigned no reply—did not raise her eyelids—only swept down the staircase two niches where she could rearrange her flattered plumage.

It really was very bad—a great jagged tear half across two breadths, and the trimming hanging in festoons. Miss Brooks was very near those tears which come so readily to the eyes of women.

The delinquent slowly descended the steps, and paused near her.

"If there is anything I can do," he said, hesitatingly. "I am very sorry."

"Thank you—nothing," she replied, frigidly. Then she looked up, and was sorry for having been spiteful. The blue, keen eyes did look concerned and annoyed. A blush and smile came together to her face.

"It is a dreadful rent, you see."

"Let me call a carriage," he said, eagerly. "I was horribly awkward."

But she declined, firmly and quietly, and he bowed and moved away; and Marian Brooks made the best of her way home, and wondered much about the stranger with his tanned face.

Two days afterwards, crossing a road in a hurry, she came to grief. It was just in the edge of evening, and there was the usual tangle of vehicles at the corner. Hastening to avoid the spatter of mud from a heavy waggon, her foot slipped and she fell. Her hands were full of small parcels, on which she retained her hold. So she came down on her face, and lay there prone and helpless.

For a bare instant of time she had the impulse which most of us do have under the circumstances—to lie still and not get up at all. Then wiser counsels prevailed, assisted by a hand on her arm.

"Are you hurt, madam? Can you rise?"

She demonstrated that she could by getting up at once. A little group had gathered, but the man who stood nearest her, and who had spoken, was the blue-eyed hero of the concert room. He knew her, and raised his hat.

"Are you hurt?" he asked, again.

"No," she said, glancing down at herself; "but I am—"

And she paused.

"Muddy? Yes; I shall call a carriage this time." "No decent vehicle would take me in, I'm afraid, but I can't walk in this plight."

They were standing quite alone, the others who had paused going on again about their several businesses. Over his arm the stranger carried some sort of a plaided wrap.

"If you will allow me," he said, and folded it about her, covering her from shoulders to feet. Then he stopped a passing vehicle, and in another minute Miss Brooks was being rolled home, remembering when half way there that she had not asked directions for the return of the mantle she wore.

And he stood for a minute on the pavement edge, congratulating himself that he at least knew which house in the great city held the woman whose face and voice had haunted him for the last forty-eight hours.

Marian Brooks beheld herself mud-spattered to the

eyebrows, her pretty poplin dress ruined, and her bonnet crushed. Being blessed with good nerves and a tolerably philosophical mind when there was no one but herself to blame, she laughed, ate her dinner, and dressed for the evening party.

It was at such times that she asserted the claims that she had to beauty. To-night, in a great many superfluous yards of silvery gauze, she looked cool and pale and unexcitedly royal. She wore white hyacinths and tuberoses, and danced seldom; so that when late in the evening her hostess came to her she was as fresh as if she had but just entered the rooms.

"I want to introduce somebody—a gentleman, of course. Be as nice to him as you can consistently, dear. He hasn't been in civilized society before for six or eight years. I don't know whether he is frightened or bored, but I can't trust any one but you to take him off my hands."

"Very well," Marian answered, resignedly, "I'll do what I can."

Then she settled herself among the mistiness of her wide floating drapery and waited.

"Marian, dear, let me present Mr. Sherburne. Mr. Sherburne, Miss Brooks."

Marian, glancing up, recognized with a little flutter the brown beard and blue eyes she had twice before seen.

Of course they bowed like any other two strangers till Mrs. Hubert's back was turned; then Mr. Sherburne remarked, with a long breath of satisfaction:

"Miss Brooks, I am very glad to be legally and formally made known to you."

She gave him an instant's full, bright look, and answered:

"So fortunate too. Now I can return the plaid I was sent home in. Mr. Sherburne, if you know how that piece of property has been weighing on my mind these last few hours you would sympathize with the feeling of relief I can now experience."

After which unconventional beginning they went on charmingly. If John Sherburne had been shy or bored earlier in the evening he had thoroughly recovered now. Miss Brooks came down from her high estate, and was as sweet and gracious as she knew how to be when occasion made it worth while.

There are really very few actual barriers to be broken down when a man has torn a lady's dress to tatters and afterwards picked her out of the mud, and has been forgiven for both offences. Miss Brooks thought of it promenading beside him between the dances.

"If Harry Althorpe, or one of that sort had seen me in such a state how I should have hated him!" she said to herself.

Then she glanced up at the bronze-faced Hercules in broadcloth beside her, and concluded that he must be of quite another sort since she did not hate him at all.

She danced once or twice, fulfilling already-made engagements, and found him waiting for her when she came back to her seat. She gave him her last dance, and found that, civilized or not, he was not a bad partner.

"If you'll take the risk of my piloting among all this perishable material," he had said, doubtfully, as the first bars of the music sounded.

Then she was floating down the room on his arm, and all at once realized the comfort of his superior physical strength. She was standing calm-breathed and unflushed after one circuit of the room, and he was looking at her and the gauze he had run among the whirling couples with a mixture of admiration for her and amazement at his own success very visible on his face.

"How easily you take it all!" he said. "I never suffered so much in my life."

"Mr. Sherburne!" she cried, amusement and surprise in the exclamation. "Don't you like it after all?"

"With you, yes. But it has been years since I have danced in such a crowded place. Miss Brooks," he added, bending his handsome head low over her, "there is nothing you could propose that I shouldn't like."

"Even another waltz? I didn't propose this, I believe."

All at once John Sherburne awoke to the consciousness that he had been making an idiot of himself—not so much in what he had said as in the heart-throbs under the speech. Indeed the words and feeling mixed themselves so hopelessly that he could not recall what he had said. He did not say a dozen words more till he said good night, with permission to call the next day.

Then he went off and walked in the raw gray dawn to calm himself down to sleeping condition. It was not altogether strange. Better and wiser men than he had done more absurd things than that after an evening with Marian Brooks.

Some women are born coquettes. She was one of them. She numbered her victims—or rather other



[GIVING WAY.]

people did for her—among all sorts of men. Not that she was very different from other girls in her daily walk and conversation. She did not utter quite so many inanities perhaps, but she was not a brilliant talker. Only there was apparent that wonderful grace of manner, and through it all the magnetic drawing of a generous, brave, large heart.

John Sherburne, fresh from his narrow experience over seas, found this rose-and-white fresh face sweet beyond any words of comparison.

It stormed venomously next day, but he made his call notwithstanding, and had the satisfaction of finding his enchantress alone.

I think he had some absurd notion that angels never laid aside their wings, that he should find her in fluttering gauze, and should be made half dizzy with the scent of tuberose and hyacinths. Instead of which he beheld her in a plain brown gown with linen collar and cuffs, and not an ornament that did not belong to daylight, and stormy daylight at that.

There was a great glowing grate fire in the room; the air was warm and perfumed, and his call lengthened out into a visit.

No one can say that Miss Brooks, secured by the weather from any intrusion of other callers, did or did not see some invisible feminine wiles for detaining him. Only when the door closed after him at last, and her cousin asked if he had really gone, saying that she thought he had meant to spend the day, Marian answered with the eloquence of a smile and blush.

But with her the fitting colour did not mean much; the blood was always coming and going in her unflushed face. Then she sat down silent over her embroidery, dreaming wide-awake dreams of the Indian life of which he had talked, mingling its ideal glories of colour, and warmth, and languid luxury with the English realities of north-east wind and cold rain.

After that for a fortnight or more Marian Brooks

never once reverted to her age or her exhausted life, or her want of interest in the universe generally. The programme of her days was very much as of old. She exhibited no more than the usual enthusiasm about it, but perhaps some small unrecognised new charm was at work in her heart.

She met John Sherburne almost daily; the accidents of these contacts came so regularly that an outsider might have fancied some fixed law at work controlling events.

He said little about his past—nothing of his future. Mrs. Hubert, a cousin whose house was half his home, was as enthusiastic about him as if she had been herself in love with him.

Once when she was talking to Marian of the years he had spent abroad, some vague thought of Miss Gilbert's coming lover did flash over that young lady. But Mrs. Hubert had never referred to any engagement of the sort, and she reasoned that fate did not often complicate matters in that fashion out of books. Besides, suppose that one chance in ten thousand did befall, she was no more in love with him than he with her. And so it went on.

One looks back and wonders sometimes, after a train of small events has ended in a crash, or has escaped a catastrophe by a chance as wonderful, at the idiocy of which human nature is capable. Miss Brooks went on refusing to put two and two together in a way that afterwards she would have set down as rank stupidity, if nothing worse.

One day—it takes just such air-light trifles to balance destinies sometimes—a letter which she was posting was whirled out of her hand by a sudden gust. John Sherburne—he had been with her for the last hour—picked it up and half unconsciously glanced at the superscription. If a sudden blow had knocked him down then and there he would not have taken a more completely reversed view of the world and his share in it. But the letter was dropped into its intended place, and he

went on with his talk and walk as composedly as if the last half-minute had not opened his eyes and turned his life upside down at once.

That night Miss Brooks, dressed for a wedding reception, glanced at a card that was handed her, and determined to see the visitor. Under the name were a few pencilled words:

"I am going away to-night. I have come for good-bye. You will not refuse me a minute."

And she did not. She went down in her rustling trailing silk, her opera cloak of cashmere and swans-down clinging about her shoulders and neck like a soft white cloud. He was standing in the middle of the room, and took both her hands, as she came up to him, looking silently and earnestly into her face.

"I am going away," he said; "a matter that should have been attended to sooner will take me hence. Whatever your future judgment of me may be, I ask you to believe that the memory of this fortnight past will carry in itself punishment enough for any lapse of duty."

She had opened her lips to speak, but something in his words, and the way they were said, stopped her voice. She did not understand him; she only knew that something was wrong, and that he was going away. Perhaps, too, a consciousness of what was in his heart confused her ready woman's wit. At any rate, there was silence between them for the space of half a minute, then he broke it.

"I will not detain you." Then he raised her hand to his lips—"Good-bye."

Miss Brooks went back to her room, having literally said not a single word except the one which answered his last. She had done nothing to commit herself; her looks had no more betrayed her than her lips. Betrayed—she never thought of that. She was in a half-stunned state—a numb sense that something had happened, and that he was going away. She said it over to herself all the evening, while she talked and laughed and danced at the ball to which she went when the reception was over with a good deal more than her usual animation.

John Sherburne, whirled away by the evening express, wondered within himself whether he had acted most like an idiot or a knave. You see he must have been a very strong man or a very weak one to have risked this last meeting at all.

Whatever suspicions may have raised themselves clamouring for confirmation in Marian Brooks's mind she would not entertain them. A little skilful questioning and Mrs. Hubert might perhaps have unconsciously settled the matter. But that she was not equal to. She did sit down next day and write Miss Gilbert a chatty, playful letter, of which it took four pages to arrive at the real point of the epistle—a question squeezed into a corner:

"By the way, what is his name? You have never told me, but I suppose he has one."

Miss Brooks found her question apparently answered two or three days later. A letter came from Laura, crossing her own on the way:

"I have just had a telegram from Frank, who is on his way here. Probably he will have arrived before this reaches you."

Frank—well that ended it. There was no mistaking the one name for the other certainly. But that night Mrs. Hubert came in, irate and declamatory.

"I have no patience with men. Just at the last minute John Sherburne announced that he was going away to keep an engagement he had made years ago. What am I to think of him? In my family, or as good as there, for three weeks, and never mention the thing. I was so confounded that I never even asked the girl's name."

And Miss Brooks smiled sweetly on her friend's indignation, and replied with some commonplace remark, soothing and senseless. But she found herself adrift and uncertain again, and waited with more discomfort than she was willing to allow for Laura Gilbert's answer to her question.

It never came. Whether Miss Gilbert had not seen it, or whether in her preoccupation with her own affairs it slipped out of her mind entirely, remains to be explained. However, letters arrived thick and fast from her.

With no special encouragement, it must be confessed, she had elected Marian Brooks as her dearest friend.

Presently came a request that that young lady would act as bridesmaid in the coming ceremony.

Laura was in no specially exalted condition of affection, did not profess to be—that was one comfort. The catastrophe of matrimony to which she had been looking forward these four years almost was at hand, and she meant to take the final plunge with all possible éclat.

She sent page after page full of millinery, and that sort of matter, and the references to her prospective husband were incidental and always as Frank.

Miss Brooks had retrograded into the state of

mind in which she had been that other morning when this late interest of her days had begun. She told herself that the brightest and sweetest of life had gone by her—that with so many years over her head she had no right to dream of such comfort as loving and being loved. She was an old, old woman in heart and brain, if her face did not show it, and even on that point she was doubtful.

I think just at that time the Pharaohs, with all their weight of modern ages on their mummied remains, were mere infants in arms beside her fancied antiquity.

Not that she did the heroics in the least. High tragedy was not in her line. I regret to say that at this precise juncture she was rather stupid and dull, and when roused rather fretful than otherwise, with just a little vein of desperation as well.

She wrote back to Miss Gilbert that she would serve in the desired capacity.

Just at this time appeared Charles Marshall.

Miss Brooks had already chronicled two refusals against him, but he had persistently come back for a third time. Why no mortal knew, least of all himself.

He was not a despairing swain away from his enchantress; he wrote no verses; he moaned no moans; he ate, and drank, and slept on much the same scale as usual. But at intervals of six months he came back and preferred his request with a calm stoicism that made Marian almost doubt what the end would be. His last attempt was made while she was in that state of uncertainty about the identity of Laura's lover.

He came one rainy night—he always did come on rainy nights when he had that particular errand on hand. Miss Brooks had learned the signs of the times.

"I might as well have it over, I suppose," she thought, then she put her work down and led him off to a small room behind the parlours, half library, half conservatory.

She had that day received some rare English plants, and one of Charles Marshall's rare enthusiasms was a liking for growing green things. But to-night his speech was short. A silence fell.

Miss Brooks stood in the softly shaded light resignedly waiting. In the fulness of time she knew he would begin, and he did.

"Miss Marian, I have twice asked you to be my wife, and you have twice refused me. I have come to ask you again to-night."

"That you may have three refusals to chronicle?" she forced herself to say at last, seeing that the stillness would probably suffocate her in half a minute more.

But her face and voice were not as harsh as the words, and there was a nerveless smile about her lips.

"Heaven alone knows. I hope not that. I can't talk a lot of rubbish about love and that, as a younger man might" (he was probably twenty-seven), "but you know well enough that there isn't an earthly thing I wouldn't do to make you happy. I think you know the worst of me, and I don't believe I'd break your heart."

"No," she said, meditatively, "I don't think you would. Sometimes I doubt if I have one to be broken by anybody. I believe a little pulverizing would be a benefit. I'm so horribly old, you see, Mr. Marshall."

"Yes, I know," he urged, accepting her vein, "so are we all. Methuselah was juvenile compared with us. But I'm not too old to fancy that a certain monosyllable from you would help to rejuvenate me. At any rate, Marian, I give you fair warning—I shall keep coming in the hope of hearing it till you tell me with your own lips that some other man has heard it to the same question."

She gave a deep sigh of mock patience.

"I don't see what I'm to do with you, then, except to say the word to-night, and be rid of you. Mr. Marshall, I'm almost tempted."

She stood there with burning cheeks and lips apart, looking him straight in the face with eager, half-startled eyes, as if some unseen, unexpected influence was urging her on to an unthought-of decision.

"Are you in earnest?" he asked, as if half doubting the evidence of his ears.

"Yes, I think I am."

He had been so sure of rejection beforehand that this unexpected compliance was too much for him. "I can't believe it," he stammered.

"Very well, sir. If you begin by doubting my word—" Then the ridiculous side of the affair struck her, and she laughed her peculiar, low, ringing laugh. "I will tell you. You say you care for me—at least you have asked me to marry you. I frankly confess that half an hour ago I never dreamed of doing such a thing. Now, if you will give me three days for consideration, I think I shall save you the trouble of coming again, as you say you shall. At any rate, Charles Marshall, remember that I say I respect and like you beyond any man I know."

He moved towards her, taking her hand. Twice he opened his lips to speak, and twice no words came. Then with a desperate dash he found his voice, but his utterance was choked and broken.

"You shall have your three days. Make them as short as you can, that's all. You're too good for me, Marian, but I think you'll not be sorry."

Then he took himself off, and Miss Brooks went back to the bosom of her family with the red flush in her cheeks and the light in her eyes.

She had expected Miss Gilbert on the afternoon of the next day but one, but there was a snow-storm and a detention of trains, and she did not arrive till noon of the third day. Miss Brooks grew more and more anxious; she was not quiet one instant of all the hours she waited for her friend's retarded coming. At last, on the afternoon of the day on which Charles Marshall was coming for his answer the two girls were together in the warm bright room devoted to Laura during her stay in London. Miss Gilbert was unpacking and "settling," in a business-like fashion she had where her own comfort was concerned. In an easy-chair Miss Brooks sat watching her and listening.

Presently from the depths of a trunk she flung a small portfolio on the floor. The fastening burst, and the contents flew about.

Miss Brooks picked up the scattered papers. Among the rest a card photograph lay face downwards. She turned it over with perfectly steady fingers. John Sherburne, of course, shaven and shorn, but there were the same keen, calm eyes and firm lips.

"This, I suppose, is Frank. You've never told me the rest you know."

"Haven't I? I thought you knew. Yes, it's he, John Francis Sherburne. You think him as good-looking as Harry Althorpe?"

"Harry Althorpe!" she exclaimed, supreme wonder in her tone. "You never liked him?"

"Well," she replied, plaintively, "I might have if it hadn't been for this. Of course it's all over now," she sighed.

Marian sat silent for a half-minute, holding the picture, and thinking how very, very unevenly fate distributed destinies. Then she put the likeness back, closing the case with careful deliberation.

Miss Gilbert resumed:

"He has a cousin here—Mrs. Hubert, whom I never liked. By the way, it is strange you never met him; he was detained here three weeks or more on business."

"I have met him," Miss Brooks said, quietly, "though Mrs. Hubert always spoke of him as John. So I did not identify him with your Frank."

"What's in a name?" Miss Gilbert laughed.

"A great deal, sometimes."

Then the twilight came and the dinner-bell.

While they were still over their coffee the door-bell rang with a sharp, quick peal. Miss Brooks put down her cup with a little tremor gone in an instant.

The servant brought her a card presently, and she rose with some laughing words of excuse.

At the mirror at the end of the room she paused a minute to smoothe the wavy puffs of her hair, and settle a ribbon, then she drew a stem of jasmine from the vase on the mantle, and went her way.

She wore a dress of deep garnet, soft and heavy, and Laura Gilbert, keen-eyed to note other women's perfections, acknowledged to her own heart that her dear friend had a sort of varying beauty which men might possibly like.

Miss Brooks's interview with Charles Marshall took place behind closed doors. It was an hour long, and when it was over she went straight to her own room, and indulged in half an hour of seclusion. From which Miss Gilbert arrived at her own conclusions.

"Tell me about it," she said, coaxingly, after a little interlude of purring and cooling intended to introduce the subject.

"Well, where shall I begin?"

"No matter about the beginning. It's the end I'm interested in, you know."

"The end is not yet. Only I've promised to marry Charles Marshall some day."

"Oh, Marian! that solemn thing! I wouldn't change with you. Frank can at least laugh sometimes."

And Marian listened with smiling serenity, even when Laura announced that Sherburne was to follow her to London in two or three days.

He came, and Marian Brooks met him with the same composed sweetness of demeanour which told nothing of the state of mind underneath.

He behaved himself with a half-guilty gravity and reticence that made Laura, at fault for once, fancy that the two had taken a dislike to each other. It was rather a relief to her, on the whole, for she had not felt quite safe on the score of the impression that Marian's beauty might make on him. If either suffered in the other's presence there was no betrayal.

Miss Brooks had never given any hint as to what was in her heart. So their respective worlds rolled on smoothly enough, to all seeming.

Laura had, of course, announced her friend's engagement at the earliest possible minute. It was no secret, and it was as well that Sherburne should know it. So he came and went in pursuance of his duty, in and out of the house every day, neither he nor Marian going out of the usual routine one inch, either to meet or avoid the other.

The two girls shopped perseveringly; there were endless consultations with dressmakers and milliners; e Sherburne acted as men of well-regulated minds do, act at such times—like a lamb led to the slaughter Mrs. Hubert did what politeness required her to do toward the new-comer, but always with a smothered grudge beneath.

Sherburne left town after a while, apparently possessed by some uneasy spirit which even Miss Gilbert's society was not sufficient to quiet. He said he was called away on business, but no one was deceived, Laura as little as the rest. But she did not object; it was something to be able to give her undivided mind to business. And then—Miss Brooks began to notice—they saw a great deal more of Harry Althorpe than before.

There was not a word of fault to be found with it all. He joined them in their morning shopping excursions, content to wait while they deliberated over counters—willing to be appealed to on questions of colour and quality. He came to the house as other gentlemen did, for Marian was to have the fullest liberty during her engagement.

She did not know that he ever saw Laura by herself; indeed she hardly thought about it at all. She was as far removed from suspicion of others as she would have been from the possibility of such a connection for herself.

But one day a small matter gave her a most uncomfortable twinge.

Althorpe had accompanied them home, having for excuse a message for Marshall, whom he wished to see, and he was to lunch with them. While waiting for that gentleman he sat turning over the leaves of a volume of Keats on the table. Directly after their departure, while Laura still stood at the window watching them down the steps, Maria walked straight to the book to verify an uncertain quotation which had been haunting her all the morning.

The rustle of the leaves drew Miss Gilbert's attention, and she turned just in time to see Marian unfolding a paper which had lain in the volume. There was no address, no signature; she had just time to catch a word or two before the other, flying across the room, snatched it from her hands. She looked up in blank amazement.

"It is mine. How dare you read my notes?" Laura exclaimed, breathless; then all at once came to her a sense that she was making herself ridiculous. "I beg your pardon, dear," she said, sweetly. "It's only one of Frank's little letters. I left it in the book last night, and the poor fellow makes such a show of himself."

But Maria doubted. Laura never read poetry. She was not ordinarily so careful of her lover's letters, for they were lying all over the house subject to any one's inspection. Then all at once it flashed on her that the delicate, almost feminine calligraphy was very different from Sherburne's large, careless dash. She began to wish uneasily that he would come back, or that their preparations were complete. But she was tied hand and foot; there was nothing to be done but to wait the slow progress of events, and she could not speak a word to any one.

Sherburne did not come; the shopping went on; even Marshall took himself out of town. Althorpe did not appear quite so frequently; when he did come he was much more attentive to Miss Brooks than to her friend. Marian, regarding him as rather harmless and brainless, tolerated him, and let the matter go on. But one day, when Laura had left the house to spend the day with Mrs. Hubert, a sudden necessity arose for her presence at home. Marian put on her bonnet and went after her. It was an hour since Laura had started, but she had not reached her destination when her friend arrived there. Nor did she come for an hour afterwards, then she was pale and agitated, and made some elaborate, incoherent excuse, which struck Mrs. Hubert as well as Marian. From that day she seemed to lose her interest in what had before absorbed her whole attention. Or, if she cared, it was spasmodically. She had solitary crying fits, and grew thin, and obviously was failing in health.

Sherburne came back and saw it at the first glance. The man's protecting impulse of strength asserted itself. All this fuss and worry of preparation should be stopped at once. Let the wedding take place immediately; he did not care how quietly, or with what she already had if quiet was not a part of her plans.

Miss Brooks supported his arguments. Affairs were getting to be more than she could endure. She thought if the wedding was once over Laura would settle down into her estate peacefully enough. She knew her horror of unconventionality well enough to be sure that public opinion would keep her in place.

At the end of Sherburne's last appeal he bent over her, taking the forlorn little face between his hands, and kissed her eyes and lips. It was the first caress Marian Brooks had ever seen him give her. The blood rushed to her head; she was half blind and dizzy for an instant, then she was recalled from making a spectacle of herself by the sound of Sherburne's voice uttering an exclamation of alarm and appeal.

Laura Gilbert lay a white, helpless wraith across his arm, she had fainted dead away.

Marian got her upstairs and to bed, then went back to Sherburne, who was waiting, frightened to death, as in the manner of men, in the parlour below. Him she dismissed summarily. She might have borne it all the better had it not been for her own release a few minutes back. With a woman as proud as this one reaction from that state would come near being fatal to any tenderness.

Laura was in a state of high hysterics when she went back to her. Having sobbed herself into exhausted quiet, Miss Brooks was preparing to leave her for a time, feeling that some sort of private demonstration of her own was necessary.

From the door she was called back.

"Marian, I must tell you. It will kill me if this should go on any longer. I—I'm married!"

The last word was a scream almost.

"To whom, pray?" asked Marian, in the most rigid tone.

"Harry Althorpe."

"Laura, why under heaven haven't you said so before, and saved all the gossip there will be?"

The shock had brought her back to common-place, and, woman fashion, the next thing was Mrs. Grundy.

The door opened softly. A servant appeared with a whispered message. Mr. Marshall was below. Marian shut the door with a venomous little jerk, and left Miss Gilbert cowering among the bed-shutes.

And half an hour afterwards Marshall left the house, charged with the agreeable errand of informing Sherburne that his betrothed was another man's wife.

Well, he did not commit suicide. He did not see Mrs. Althorpe again before she went home under her husband's care. Neither did he and Miss Brooks meet, except casually in the presence of others. He was a little paler and graver than before, and did not show himself much in society. That was all the difference apparent. And people soon stopped talking.

Two months afterwards he came to say good-bye. He was going back to Calcutta. England did not suit him, he said, with an equivocal smile.

Miss Brooks rather wondered at herself that his announced departure caused her so little pain. She moralized about it after he had gone, and concluded that the old fabled state was really true. She had exhausted life and its sensations.

That very night Marshall came to see her.

"Sherburne's going back, I hear."

"Yes," Miss Brooks said, he had been there making a farewell call.

"Marian," Marshall said, with a little difficulty of speech, "I'm not a man of many words, but I've wondered sometimes if you were free, and had the choice between us, how your decision would go. We are good enough friends, I think, to talk the matter over quietly. Do you want your freedom?"

There was a minute's pause. Miss Brooks was doing the most intense thinking she had ever done in her life. She announced her decision in a single word to Marshall, standing with face turned away somewhat pale and very quiet.

"No."

So Sherburne went back to Calcutta, and Marian Brooks and Charles Marshall were married in March. There is just as little unmitigated heart-breaking as unmitigated satisfaction in the world.

John Sherburne will probably go on to the full measure of his days with no more outward sign than they two, the "married and happy" ones. Both are too sensible to make regrets or nurse disappointments out of bare possibilities.

K. R.

THE UNICORN.—We learn that the unicorn was one of the royal badges of King James III., who struck gold coins called "unicorns" and "half-unicorns." In Boutell's "English Heraldry" we read (page 274) that two silver unicorns "royally gorged and chained on" were assumed as supporters by James IV., and retained in use. At the union of the two kingdoms under James I. and VI., the lion of England and the unicorn of Scotland were adopted,

and, with the exception of Protector Cromwell, who used the lion of England and the red dragon of Wales on his broad seal and privy seal, they have continued to the present day. So much for the history of the use of this elegant though apocryphal beast. Whether Margaret adopted it as her husband's badge, or James used it in compliment to his wife, may be left an open question; but we think that the ornamental addition of the unicorn and chain may be considered to represent the fierce and dangerous animal after his subjugation by the force of female purity and loveliness.

STRANGE FORTUNES OF A DREAM.—The *Banff* correspondent of the *Scotsman* supplies the following narrative:—"The grave on the farm of Upper Dalachy, Boyndie, near Banff, named William Moir, about White Sunday last, dreamed of seeing a dead body, besmeared with blood, lying on a raised mound by the seashore at a point opposite the farm, and about a mile to the west of the village of White Hills. The dream haunted Moir so much that, after resisting the impulse for a long time, he proceeded on Thursday to the spot indicated, with a spade. On turning over the second turf he came upon a human skull. He continued the search, and ultimately, with the assistance of another servant, uncovered the complete skeleton of a man lying at full length with its head to the south and the feet towards the sea. The bones were conveyed to Banff by the police, and on Friday Inspector McGregor explored the mound, which was known in the locality to have been a kelp kiln, which, however, had not been used for upwards of 50 years. It is generally thought that the body had been washed ashore from the sea, and been buried there for convenience, though no one remembers such a circumstance having taken place."

WHEN THE AGE IS IN THE WAT IS OUT.—Mathews was one day invited to dine at the house of a friend at Chiswick, where Moody, once a celebrated actor, was to be of the party. Moody had long left the stage, and was then a very old but very fine remnant of what he had been. During dinner he talked with great animation, brought back his theatrical reminiscences, and, in short, exhibited no sign whatever of mental decay. Mathews, exerted himself to amuse this Nestor of the boards, and was honoured by the declaration "that Garrick himself was not greater in what he did." At length Moody was asked for a song; he complied, singing in strong though uneven tones the old Scottish "We're a noddin'," which, however, he gave with a strong Irish accent. When he had reached nearly the end of the second verse he suddenly stopped. All waited awhile, thinking that he was pausing to revive his memory. At length his host gently said: "Mr. Moody, I am afraid the words have escaped you." "Words, sir! what words?" asked the old man, with a look of great surprise. "The words of your song." "Song! what song, sir?" "The rest of the song you have been so kind as to favour us with—'We're a noddin', of which you have sung one verse.'" "Heaven bless you, sir!" said Moody, hastily. "I have not sung a song these ten years, and shall never sing again. I am too old to sing, sir!" "Well, but you have been singing, and very well too." To this Moody, with agitation and earnestness, replied, "No, no, sir; I have not sung for years. Singing is out of the question at my time of life." All looked at each other, and then at the old man, who exhibited in his face and manner such an evident unconsciousness that it was felt unfit to advert any farther to the subject. This was an affecting evidence of partial decay.—*Representative Actors.* By W. Clark Russell.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY AT JERUSALEM.—Mr. C. W. Wilson has addressed the following letter to the *Times*:—"I trust you will grant me space in your valuable columns to give a brief account of an important discovery which has been made at Jerusalem by my friend, Mr. C. Schick, and which will, I think, be of interest to many of your readers. It will be remembered that Captain Warren, R.E., while conducting the excavations made at Jerusalem by the Palestine Exploration Fund, explored a remarkable rock-hewn passage leading southwards towards the Temple area from the subway at the Convent of the Sisters of Zion. Mr. Schick has found a continuation of this passage, or rather aqueduct, as it is now proved to be, towards the north, and has traced it from the convent to the north wall of the city, a little east of the Damascus gate. At this point the aqueduct has been partially destroyed by the formation of a ditch, cut in solid rock, which lies in front of and communicates with the well-known caverns; it is, therefore, older than these, and can hardly be assigned a later date than that of the Kings of Judah. Mr. Schick was unable at the time to follow up his discovery; but the Palestine Exploration Fund have taken the matter in hand, and hope to find the source from which the water was derived. In my notes to the Ordnance Survey of

Jerusalem, p. 79 (published in 1866), I pointed out the possible existence of an aqueduct in this position connecting the large pool north of the so-called "Tombs of the Kings" with the subway at the convent; and, should future researches prove this view to be correct, we may possibly identify the aqueduct with that made by Hezekiah when "he stopped the upper watercourse (accurately, source of the waters) of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the City of David" (2 Chron. xxxii. 30). It may also be the "conduit of the Upper Pool," mentioned in Isaiah and the Second Book of Kings. The existence of the aqueduct lately discovered is a strong argument in favour of the belief that the City of David occupied a portion of Mount Moriah; and it may possibly enable us to identify the Pool, or some source near it, as the Upper Gihon, and Silvan as Gihon in the Valley. Mr. Schick has also discovered a second series of caverns a little east of those previously known, and has made a sketch of the great aqueduct, more than 50 miles long, which formerly supplied Jerusalem with water. A full account of these discoveries would, I fear, be too long for insertion in your paper; but I may add that a detailed description of them will be given in the next quarterly statement of the Palestine Fund.

FACETIE

SOME spinsters complain that the men leave them alone, even when they never leave them.

HOW TO PREVENT MILK TURNING INTO CURD.—Buy it of a London milkman.

A TIGHT FIT.

An Irishman who had blistered his fingers trying to draw on a pair of boots, exclaimed, aloud: "I believe I shall never get 'em on until I wear 'em a day or two."

An English farmer's wife, who, some time ago, found that a party of Baptists had performed the inaugural ceremony of their sect on her premises, exclaimed, indignantly, "Drat the creatures! I'll teach them to leave all their nasty sins in my pond."

The other day a gentleman, for being in very high spirits (of wine), was sent to prison. "Why did you not bail him out?" inquired a mutual friend. "Bail him out!" exclaimed the other; "why you could not pump him out."

TAKING UMBRAGE.

Mamma: "Um-ber-el-la—your syllables I have often told you, Georgie, is incorrect. Now let me hear you pronounce the word properly."

Georgie (in a huff): "Gingham."—*Punch.*

THE NEW CURATE.

Orthodox Elderly Spinster: "What a heavenly sermon, Maria! There, if you'd have only shut your eyes, I declare you might have thought it was a bishop!"—*Punch.*

PATERNAL SYMPATHY.—A married lady complained that her husband had ill-used her. Her father, hearing it, boxed her ears. "Tell him," said the father, "that if he beats my daughter I will beat his wife." Rather a pleasant prospect for the lady.

HARD WORDS.—Mrs. Malaprop read a paragraph about shaving by aid of Exegesis. Wishing to inform to a clergyman who wore a beard, her opinion that he would look better without it, she told him that she should recommend him an Exegesis. Best of it is, he didn't know the word.—*Punch.*

COME TO HAND.—A lady of our acquaintance, who has a pretty hand, is anxious to learn whether people are more liable than common to "burn their fingers" if they happen to be taper ones. We cannot say, but we have advised her not to let a spark get at them.

SINGLE AND MARRIED.—When you see two young persons seated in the centre of a pew in church you may make up your mind they are engaged or going to be; but when one is at the head and the other at the foot of the pew you can immediately determine that they are married.

SLIGHTLY CONFUSED.—Mrs. Malaprop, on Thanksgiving Day, was charmed with the Common Councilmen in their magazine gowns. The same mistress of the English language much admired the appearance of the soldiers, especially the Lancets, but felt greatly disappointed that the Prince's doctors were not in the procession.—*Punch.*

"I AM glad," said a missionary to an Indian chief, "that you do not drink whiskey; but it grieves me to find that your people use so much of it." "Ah, yes," said the red man, and he fixed an impressive eye upon the preacher, which communicated the reproach before he uttered it, "we Indians use a great deal of whiskey, but we do not make it."

A LEGITIMATE GROWN.—On Leap Year's Day, the 29th of February, a telegram arrived from Amsterdam, informing us that the Count de Oubambord, with

his suite, had left Dordrecht, and arrived on that day at Breda, where he had alighted at the "Crown" hotel. The Count de Chambord does not abdicate the crown of France by stopping at the Crown of Breda, which, however, he may by this time have discovered to be the crown for his money.—*Punch*.

A GENTLEMAN was in treaty with a London horse dealer for the purchase of a mare, but could not agree by 10l. Next morning, however, making up his mind to split the difference, he posted off to the stable-yard, where the first person he met was the groom. "Master up, Joe?" said he. "Na, master be dead," said Joe, "but he left word for you to have the mare."

FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

An economical friend of ours read in the paper the other day that "a child had met its death through swallowing a reel of cotton."

He says that this is not the right way of putting the event, having due regard to its most important feature. He would say "a reel of cotton was lost to industrial purposes through being swallowed by a child."

COUNTER WIT.

"These ladies are like birds that are on the wing," said a humorous assistant to his employer as a bevy of damsels left the shop.

"Why so?" asked the proprietor.

"Because it takes them a long time to settle upon their purchase" (perches), replied the assistant.

The proprietor saw the "point," and was so gratified at his astuteness that he at once raised the assistant's wages.

A SCARCITY OF H's.—A worthy alderman down in Kent is so great a purist that he will never pay a bill that has a fault of orthography in it. One day he received a bill for a pocket of "ups" (hops). The learned Priscian sent for the witless wight, and, giving him a good lecturing, asked him if he was not ashamed to spell "hops" in that manner. "Why, sir," answered the man, "if you must know the truth, we have been obliged to do it ever since your brother-in-law took all the h's to spell 'iron.'"

ALL THE WORLD IN THE PARK.—We live and learn. Even those who are best acquainted with London must realize how little they know of its vastness, and especially of the immense area of its principal park, when they read that "another of the four quarters of the globe which surround the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park has been placed in position." Their feeling will be one of amazed incredulity until they go on and find that "the subject is 'Asia,' and the sculptor, Mr. Foley, R. A."

VACUUM CAPUT.—When Judge H. was at the bar Mr. Burgess, to play a joke, wrote on the lining of his hat vacuum caput (empty head). The hat was circulated about, exciting a smile on every countenance, except that of the owner, who deliberately took it up, and repeated the words, and, well knowing the author, addressed the court as follows: "May it please the court, I ask your honour's protection" (holding up his hat), "for," said he, "I find that Brother Burgess has written his name in my hat, and I have reason to believe he intends to make off with it."

AN EYE TO BUSINESS.—Shirtmakers, haberdashers, hosiers, and others interested in the retail linen trade, felt great satisfaction at the public announcement that Tuesday, the 27th of February, was to be a "Collar Day," and looked forward to a large demand for an indispensable article of clothing. Our aristocracy, at all events, seem not to have disappointed their expectations, for the *Echo*, in its account of the scene in St. Paul's, expressly mentioned that "Lord Ripon and Lord Halifax" were "conspicuous with their white collars," which, no doubt, had been purchased for the occasion.—*Punch*.

SUNDAY MANNERS IN HUMBLE LIFE.

Jim Bates goes out for a Walk with his Young Woman: his pal, Joe Nobbs, happens to be walking with his Young Woman in the same direction. "Ullon, Jim," says Joe, "ow are yer?" "Why, Joe," observes Jim, "'ow's yerself?" And instead of introducing their future Wives (whom they leave standing apart) the two Friends gaze at each other with the sheepish grin of conscious imbecility. Then, having nothing more to say, they part, and resume their respective walks with their Young Women as before.—*Punch*.

HOW MANY!

We understand—or rather, we gather, for we will be hanged if we do understand it!—from the *British Medical Journal* that:

A lady writes to the Academy of Sciences that she has at last found the principle which differentiates the finite from the infinite. She demands that five other academicians shall join the Academy of Sciences, and that together they shall pay her a sum of one million sterling. At this price she will yield up her secret.

Sounds very grand, doesn't it? "The principle which differentiates the finite from the infinite." We never

were good at conundrums, but we think we have heard this one before. If so, the answer is, "One, if it were long enough." We will take a slice of that million, thank you!—*Fun*.

A COMICAL INCIDENT.

Rev. F. C. Morris relates the following:

A parrot, belonging to some friends of mine, was generally taken out of the room when the family assembled for prayers, for fear he might take it into his head to join irreverently in the responses.

One evening, however, his presence happened to be unnoticed, and he was entirely forgotten.

For some time he maintained a decorous silence, but at length, instead of "Amen," out he came with "Cheer, boys, cheer."

On this the butler was directed to remove him, when the bird, perhaps thinking he had committed himself, and had better apologize, called out, "Sorry I spoke."

The overpowering effect on the company may be more easily imagined than described.

ONE BY ONE.

One by one the sands are flying,
One by one the moments fall;
Some are coming, some are going;
Do not strive to grasp them all.

One by one thy duties wait thee;
Let thy whole strength go to each;
Let no future dreams elude thee;
Learn thou first what these can teach.

One by one, bright gifts from heaven,
Joys are lent thee here below;
Take them readily when given;
Ready, too, to let them go.

One by one thy griefs shall meet thee;
Do not fear an armed band;
One will fade as others greet thee—
Shadows passing through the land.

Every hour that fleets so slowly
Has its tasks to do or bear;
Luminous the crown and holy,
If thou set each gem with care. A. P.

GEMS.

FORTITUDE has its extremes as well as the rest of the virtues, and ought, like them, to be always attended by prudence.

Of all human actions pride the most seldom obtains its end, for while it aims at honor and reputation it roaps contempt and derision.

NEVER seek to be entrusted with your friend's secret, for no matter how faithfully you may keep it you will be liable in a thousand contingencies to the suspicion of having betrayed it.

THERE are two feelings common to all high or affectionate natures—that of extreme susceptibility to opinion, and that of extreme bitterness at its injustice.

A GOOD book and a good woman are excellent things for those who know justly how to appreciate their value. Some men, however, judge of both from the beauty of the covering.

MAN is the victim of discontent. He either looks for happiness in his recollections of the past, or seeks it in the brilliant visions which his fancy has created of futurity, whereas the present should be the moment of enjoyment and preparation for the future.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A REMEDY FOR CANCER.—In 1663 a cancer came on my left hand; after much suffering, all remedies having failed, I had it burned with caustics. In 1664 it came in my right arm, this being more troublesome than the other. I nearly suffered death again with caustics. Next it came in my right hand. In the spring of 1871 the hand, growing very bad, became helpless, and I carried it in a sling. All remedies and caustics failed; I feared that my hand must be taken off. Hearing of several cancers cured by drinking wild tea in earnest. In four weeks my hand was entirely well. For the sake of many suffering with cancer I give these facts.—W.

FRUIT DRYER.—The object of this invention is to obtain pure air for the evaporation of water from fruits, berries, milk, juices, and solutions of as pure a quality as possible, so that the mass or solution may not be contaminated by impure matter carried to it by heated air. It consists in a combination of a calorific engine with a fruit dryer or evaporator, in such a manner that the engine will exhaust into the dryer or evaporator and thereby furnish the mass or solution with

a supply of pure air. The exhaust-pipe of the engine leads into the lower part of the fruit dryer or evaporator, and supplies the latter with the requisite quantity of hot air. The temperature may be lowered by causing a stream of cold air, driven by a pump or fan operated by the engine, to mix with the exhaust from the engine.

STATISTICS.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSTITUTION.—From the report of this society, presented at the recent annual meeting, it appeared that during the twelve months ending the 20th of November 960 applications for assurance, amounting to 463,200l. had been received, of which 702 proposals, amounting to 353,400l. had been accepted, and policies to that amount issued, the annual premium on which would be 11,942l. In the course of the past year 304 members had died, on whose lives 378 policies, amounting to 179,938l. had been effected. The balance of receipts over disbursements for the year had been 126,340l., thereby increasing the accumulated fund to 3,191,994l. The gross annual income arising from the interest on 19,693 existing policies (representing assurances to the amount of 9,670,743l., and bonus additions 441,905l.) was 312,632l.; added to which was the interest on the accumulated fund, 119,510l., making a gross annual income of 432,222l., and leaving the balance carried forward to the credit of the accumulated fund greater than that of the preceding year.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LORD ST. LEONARDS has completed his ninety-first year, having been born on the 12th of February, 1781.

The four Inns of Court have resolved to make a final examination compulsory in the case of all students intending to practise at the bar. The new regulation is operative from the 1st of January last.

A SALMON has lately been caught in the Seine, near Poissy, weighing 30 lb. It fetched 31. 12s. at the Paris Halles. How the fish got there is a mystery, as the Seine long ago ceased to be a salmon river.

A DUCK belonging to a gentleman at Bradford, recently laid an egg weighing above 6 ounces. When blown the shell was found to contain a second egg of the ordinary size and in a perfect condition. The bird is of the East Indian species.

A SNOW-STORM of great severity was experienced throughout the United States on the 3rd of February. In the north-west of America the winter has been so severe that many persons have been frozen to death.

THE King of Portugal has conferred the title of Knight of the Royal Military Portuguese Order of Jeza Cristo on Peter Donny, Esq., of Dumbarton, and James Galbraith, Esq., of Glasgow, "in recognition of services rendered to the Government of Portugal."

THERE is at least one State in Europe where there is more money spent on education than on the army. In Switzerland the educational budget amounts to over ten millions of francs, whereas the military expenses remain below that sum. In time of need the happy Republic can raise an army of 200,000 men.

LAUGHTER.—A hearty laugh, which is over in order, stirs up the physical man from the centre to the circumference, and tends to improve the whole physical and spiritual being. It promotes animal health and spirits, and it is to the man what the tides are to the ocean; it stirs up the sluggish depths, prevents stagnation, and keeps the whole system fresh and wholesome. It is what the Gulf Stream is to the ocean, a revivifying and warming element. The convulsion produced by hearty laughter penetrates to the minutest blood-vessel, and causes the blood to flow with a freshened impulse.

THE WEAR AND REPAIR OF THE BRAIN.—The notion that those who work only with their brains need less food than those who labour with their hands is fallacious; mental labour causes greater waste of tissue than muscular. According to careful estimates, three hours of hard study wear out the body more than a whole day of hard physical exertion. "Without phosphorus, no thought," is a German saying; and the consumption of that essential ingredient of the brain increases in proportion to the amount of labour which the organ is required to perform. The wear and tear of the brain are easily measured by careful examination of the salts in the liquid excretions. The importance of the brain as a working organ is shown by the amount of blood it receives, which is proportionally greater than that of any other part of the body. One-fifth of the blood goes to the brain, though its average weight is only one-fortieth of the weight of the body. This fact alone would be sufficient to prove that brain-workers need more food, and better food, than mechanics and farm labourers.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
BRAKING THE CHARM 481	ONE BY ONE 503
LOOK AHEAD 484	GEMS 503
VICTOR AND VAN-QUISHED 485	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES 503
SCIENCE 486	STATISTICS 503
THE NATURE OF THE SUN 487	MISCELLANEOUS 503
THE COMING COMET 487	
PRODUCTION OF STEAM IN BOILERS 487	
A VOW FULFILLED 488	
MYSTERY OF THE HAUNTED GRANGE 488	
CURIOUS HABITS OF SWALLOW 488	
THE MYSTIC EYE OF HEATHCOTE 488	
A DARING GAME; OR, NEVA'S THREE LOVERS 489	
LAURA GILBERT 489	
PACHA 489	

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROSALBA.—You write a good, plain, bold hand.
ROBERT J. (Carlisle).—There is too much uncertainty in the letter to render it available.
J. W. M.—Order what you require of the bookseller whose shop is nearest to your residence.
E. M. O. L.—We shall be unable to peruse the manuscript for some time.

CAMILLE B.—We are not at present in a position to say anything upon the subject.
C. B.—We are unable to render you any farther assistance.

S. H. H.—By referring to the last page of No. 406 you will see that the "revised copy" was duly appreciated.
SUBSCRIBER (Uk).—Having at present no room for the tale we are unable to render you the desired assistance.

LIFE'S SHADOWS.—Thanks for your note, the contents of which will meet with due consideration.
A. B.—Account of himself, his home, and his income is insufficient by reason of its vagueness.

LAUGHING JERRY.—You would do well to confide in some true friends and talk the matter over with them.
M. W.—The lines are excellent. You must have copied them from some book, for they have been published before.

DORCAS.—Whenever you wish to test the sincerity of another individual it is desirable that you should act frankly.
HELEN E.—Discoloured ivory has been restored by boiling in a solution of gelatine; after which a polish is produced by the friction of some very fine Trant sand.

LILLY AND ROSE.—The address should be furnished. The handwriting is remarkably good. Though not as elegant as some specimens forwarded to us, for all practical purposes it leaves nothing to be desired.

L.—The handwriting is deficient in neatness. The letters are tolerably well formed, but in their conjunction and in the disposition of the words the style becomes slovenly and straggling.

EDITH.—Nothing but a loving heart! Then do not place so little value upon it. Enjoy unmingled the brightness and the happiness which it will bring, and pause for a year or so lest you throw it away.

A LINDSEY'S LAST.—The hair is very pretty. It must have been taken from a young person—some "child of earth with the golden hair." It is beautiful, light golden, and very fine. The handwriting is a minor.

Y. W.—There seems to be some mistake. A minor can hardly be in business for himself in the ordinary acceptance of the term, because most of the contracts he might be required to enter into would be void on account of the disability to contract under which a minor lies.

W. N.—If you will at so early an age rush into the responsibilities of matrimony you should be careful to afford your future wife an opportunity of judging of the kind of bread and cheese wherewith you propose to provide her.

J. B.—We have no knowledge of the statement about the harrings to which you allude. We have consulted some books containing particulars of the town named and the incidents connected with the herring fishery, but do not find any foundation for your anecdote.

HELEN E.—It is possible that "Daisy" prefers some one who is a little more advanced in the elements of education. The schoolmaster has not been abroad during the last thirty years to no purpose; and deficiencies in the very rudiments are less amusing and far less tolerated than they were "once upon a time."

G. E. M.—You are wrong in supposing that a young lady's heart can be taken by storm. You must explain your position, appearance, and do almost a hundred other things before you can expect your suit to be entertained; carefully remembering all the time that it is unlikely you will win if you do not woo.

CLARA and EMMELINE.—Age and complexion are very slight circumstances upon which an opinion can be formed. Why not attempt a detailed description of the features in addition to the particulars usually given? Most of these have been omitted from the note now replied to.

WINIFRED B. (Newcastle).—The expense cannot be stated with any exactitude. It must vary in different circumstances. You will perceive this when you reflect upon the difference of time occupied when, after the preliminaries, the case comes on for trial. Twenty witnesses are called at a greater cost than five, and so forth.

AGNES.—We are afraid the lines are not new. They are very good, although they are pervaded by that morbid

melancholy which is typical of the "worm that dieth not." Why brood over that kind of joy which you admit perished in the using, and neglect to cultivate that brighter joy which "fadeth not away"?

BELLA.—Perhaps you require a greater amount of exercise than you at present take. If so, and as the spring is approaching, try the effect of the early morning walk. At all events a consulting chemist by whom you would be seen can better advise you than can we. We do not approve of cosmetics generally, therefore do not recommend the use of any except a little violet powder occasionally.

C. H. (Glasgow).—We remember the questions, and believe they were duly answered at the time they were first sent. However you shall have fresh replies. 1 Gum is usually preferred; it has not such an expanding influence on the paper as paste. 2 The crease may be obliterated by great care and patience. The loss of the glass cannot be prevented, neither can the glass under the circumstances be restored. 3 Only by regilding.

FORE-TACK BLOCK.—There are two things in your letter that "Bright-eyes" will not like. First, that it should have entered into your thoughts that any of our fair readers will be as acceptable to you as she; second, that you are only about to intend to settle down. The future imperfect tense is tantalising enough in itself, but when it is prefixed to a phrase notoriously indefinite a lady looks blankly at the speaker and turns away.

M. J. L.—The method of "quicksilvering" glass, to use your own expression, is as follows:—On a smooth and level table of iron with a slightly elevated edge mercury is poured in a thin stratum. The mercury is then covered with tin foil. Next, the glass-plate, previously well cleaned, is slowly slid along the metallic surface so as to exclude air-bubbles. Then weights are placed on the glass. In a short time the glass is raised on its edge to allow the superfluous mercury to drain off; and, lastly, the glass is carried to the drying-room.

TOM TRICKET.—You have chosen an odd name for a tradesman. What is to become of the business when the young lady who can dance well comes to hand? There should be ballast in some part of the ship; if you cannot supply the proper weight of principle it will be in vain to look for steadiness to your future wife's corporeal heaviness, which qualification you inconspicuously enough join to the more agile accomplishments. Your own interest and that of mankind generally will possibly be promoted if you defer for a season all attempts at matrimony.

"THE IMAGE OF LOVE IN CLAY."

The image of Love in clay
 Stood once on a pedestal there;
 I flung them away to-day,
 The shards of that statue fair.

For the image of Love in clay
 Is naught when it once has been shattered;
 Why should it be hid and delay
 To be rid of a thing so battered?

"Go," said I, "there are treasures
 Of silver and gold,
 Solid, substantial pleasures,
 To have and to hold.

Fairer and fairer than any,
 You have had your last day;
 The regret is the country police.
 For the image of Love in clay."

M. K. D.

PHILIP, twenty-three, dark, fond of music, and accomplished. Respondent must be about twenty-two, loving, and affectionate.

ROSA, twenty, rather tall, handsome, and affectionate, wishes to marry a tall, good-looking, and respectable mechanic.

EDWARD, thirty, short, good looking, and fond of home, would like to marry a widow from thirty to forty years of age.

RUPERT, twenty-three, tall, rather good looking, and of a pleasing disposition, wishes to marry a young lady, cheerful, and accomplished.

F. C., twenty-four, fair, good looking, and a professional man. Respondent must be dark, pretty, and have a little money.

J. H., 5ft. 10in., dark brown hair, gray eyes, fresh complexion, at present in the country police. Respondent must be tall, good looking, and fond of home.

LILLY, twenty, 5ft. 11in., light brown hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, loving, domesticated, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, about 5ft. 6in., affectionate, fond of music, and about twenty-five.

SARAH G., twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, a domestic servant, would make a loving wife to a true-hearted, steady young man, fond of home; one in regular employment desired.

CLAUDIA, eighteen, tall, dark, very good looking, accomplished, lively, good tempered, fond of home and children, wishes to marry a gentleman, tall, fair, good looking, and well educated.

EMERILY, twenty-five, medium height, very good looking, and fond of music. Respondent must be about twenty-three, tall, good looking, very fond of home and music.

LIVERPOOL, middle aged, 5ft. 6in., dark hair, gray eyes, rather stout, with a small capital, wishes to marry a lady accustomed to business, of a good disposition, and mild in temper.

ALBERT W., twenty, tall, fair, good looking, holds good position in Government office, would like to marry a tall young lady about eighteen, good looking, and fond of music.

HELEN ROSE, thirty-four, tall, dark hair, gray eyes, domesticated, loving disposition, would like to marry a gentleman from thirty-eight to fifty; he must be loving, fond of home, and able to keep a wife comfortably; a Staffordshire gentleman preferred.

LIZZIE F., twenty-eight, medium height, having lived in one situation eleven years, thinks it is time to settle in a home of her own, and would be glad to meet with some one who is in search of a steady, loving wife.

"Lizzie" is fair, has brown hair, gray eyes, is good tempered, cheerful, and capable of making an industrious working-man's home happy. Respondent should be a mechanic, fond of home and music.

A. N. would like to marry a young man from twenty to thirty, tall, dark or fair; she is not particular about the looks as long as he is good tempered, loving, and fond of home. "A. N." is nineteen, tall, rather fair, domesticated, fond of home, and can play the piano.

J. B. S., twenty-one, tall, dark hair and eyes, rather good looking, fond of music. Respondent must be a little older than himself, tall, handsome, a brunette, accomplished, fond of children; a young lady preferred with a good income.

LOUIS, twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and moustache, good tempered, fond of home, and has a knowledge of drawing. Respondent must be about twenty-six, tall, dark, fond of music and children; a young lady from the country preferred.

FLORA, twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes, handsome, accomplished, and exceedingly fond of music and the drama. Respondent must be about twenty-six, rather tall, dark, good looking, and in receipt of a good income.

HENRY RAWLIN, twenty-one, medium height, rather dark, very fond of music, and in receipt of a rather good salary. Respondent must be about his own age, rather tall, a brunette, and have a good taste for music; a lady in receipt of a good income preferred.

TOM M., medium height, good looking, a shopkeeper in a country town, wants to make his home more comfortable; he is in a good position with, in his opinion, excellent prospects. Respondent must be a good-looking and loving young lady about twenty-four, and have a little money.

ROSE and MAUD, two domestic servants, would like to marry two respectable young men. "Rose" is twenty-two, medium height, good looking, with an abundance of Auburn hair. "Maud" is twenty-three, tall, dark, rather good looking, loving, and would make a worthy wife.

EGLENTINE, medium height, dark hair and eyes, happy disposition, good pianist, domesticated, accomplished, and has a good income. Respondent must be tall, dark, loving, fond of home, and a gentleman in a good position in Birmingham preferred, about twenty-six or twenty-eight years of age.

CHARLOTTE SKEWES, nineteen, short, handsome, rather dark hair and eyes, pleasing manner, loving disposition, and passionately fond of dancing, music, the drama, and children. Respondent must be about twenty-one, fair, very good looking, fond of home, lively, in receipt of a good income, and able to keep a wife comfortably; a volunteer preferred.

ANNIE and BLANCHE.—"Annie," twenty-three, tall, a handsome blonde, would like to marry a good-looking, dark mechanic. Respondent must be steady and respectable; "Annie" would try to make him very happy. "Blanche," twenty-one, a pretty blonde, light brown hair, natural curls, a merry dark eye, a kind and loving heart, which she is willing to bestow on a steady, respectable young man.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

BRIGHT EYES is responded to by—"Jib Truss," twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., dark hair, hazel eyes, very good looking, of a loving disposition, and a sailor.

TRINOUVOUS by—"Mary," nineteen, fond of home, good tempered, domesticated, hard working, and clean.

ALBERT by—"E." a widow, thirty-six, dark hair and eyes, a loving heart, a little home, very industrious, has two dear children—a girl and boy.

CLAUDIO by—"Claudia," in her eighteenth year, 5ft. 7in., fair, abundant Auburn hair, gray eyes, domesticated, loving, and fond of home.

J. J. by—"E. J.," twenty-six, who feels sure she could cook a dinner, manage a home, and be a good and loving wife to "J. J." the mechanic.

ALFRED R. by—"Milly," twenty, tall, slender, fair, clear complexion, blue eyes, brown hair, domesticated, and fond of home.

CLARA by—"A. W.," twenty-one, medium height, light hair, fair complexion, the daughter of a perfumer and hairdresser, domesticated, and business-like.

HUBERT by—"Hannah," 5ft. 3in., a sick nurse at an institution, fair, domesticated, loving, fond of home, and good looking.

ALFRED S. by—"Elizabeth," twenty, 5ft. 4in., brown hair and eyes, has always been used to the shop, would make a good, steady wife, and is respectably connected.

HANCOCK by—"Lizzie W.," who answers to what he requires in a wife, and can also turn to housekeeping or shopkeeping in the grocery line. She is of medium height, light complexion, and twenty-two years of age.

B. A. by—"E. J.," a soldier's daughter, twenty-three, tall, dark, would make a very loving, good wife to an affectionate husband; would prefer a soldier with a good heart to any one.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence each.

THE LONDON READER, Post-free Three-halfpence Weekly, or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

* * Now Ready, VOL. XVII. OF THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XVII. Price ONE PENNY.

NOTICE.—Part 106, for MARCH, Now Ready, price 6d.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by SIDNEY A. SMITH.